Myth and Meaning in Ulysses: Homer, Tennyson and Joyce

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Contents

Abstract

This is an attempt to decode the change in meanings in adaptations of Ulysses over the ages. The basis is set on the theory of myth provided by Roland Barthes. There are additional concepts that aid the argumentation as well. Mostly it will try to trace links and breakages that herald the beginning and ending of an era. As such, ideals left by the concepts of the Hellenic, the Victorian and the Modern are addressed in the dissertation through the texts by Homer, Tennyson and Joyce on Ulysses. This is done in three correlated chapters that formulate and modulate the formation of meanings in literary depictions. Although Eurocentric in outlook, the dissertation tries to see where these meanings have coalesced and digressed. While it will begin with particular features of the primary texts, the conclusion is about the style and structure of the narrative and how that has meant more to the meaning of the text with the passage of time. Thus this is an effort to find a cohesive linearity among ages that connect writers of different epochs.

INTRODUCTION

The myth of Ulysses has been narrated through the ages. It is pregnant with meaning and value formation within the literary realm. As such when looking at its significance certain factors need to be considered. Not only is every work a reflection of the individual mind of the writer, it also incorporates contemporary factors and shows visions for the future. A book, a novel or a narration loses contact with its author after being published. Thus leading postmodernist thinkers, such as Foucault or Barthes have famously proclaimed the death of the author. The book, or the literary work of art, becomes a sentient being in its fullest ramifications. As such, the periodisation refers to literature and its transitions are blurred with the passage of time. When Romanticism, Modernism and such significant ways of thoughts are referred to, there is an inherent pattern that makes them similar, even while their differences are traced to the periods through the space they occupy in time. Questions concerning the stylistic, structural and thematic approaches have changed over time but what remains intractable is the cause and effect relationship which makes each epoch interdependent while being equally conflictual.

Thus Modernism, as a recent phenomenon in human history, is more problematical. In nature, it emphasizes more on art itself through its propensity to look at structural aspects of writing, without any outward or circumstantial reference in the narrative. This means that narration of psychological changes or projection of inner cognizance on the surroundings is given more priority than simply describing a situation by its external issues. This is where the myth of Ulysses is by far the most complex,

where the idea of periodisation itself is questioned. The neat compartments of time periods give way to a more doubtful retraction where uncertainty is more pronounced than the need for resolution. Transition and its importance as a phenomenon become much more poignant than the shift in ways of thinking.

Therefore it becomes useful to look at the transitional spaces, rather than classify literary texts firmly into genres and periods. Uncertainty in outlining the timeline and continuity of the transitional phase might be the core feature of modernism. What has to be captured, as such, is the "the art that makes life…the structure that lies beyond time, history, character and visible reality" (Bradbury 25*)*. This, then, is the central motto that drives the modern mindset; an arbitrary disregard of surroundings and complete devotion to form that belies mere conformity. The question that arises then is whether modernism is completely devoid of any relation to prior eras. Thus a thorough look into the characteristics of the Victorian era, the immediate phase before modernism, might shed some light on the advent of modernism as a shifting away from preset notions. Moreover, as this thesis is going to be more grounded on the modern Ulysses, thereby modernism as an event, it is only salient to give a brief understanding of how modernism differs and links it to other literary breakthroughs.

Many critics have seen modernism "as a form of late bourgeois astheticism" (23, Bradbury, *Modernism)*. This means that it is still a literary reflection of reality in an avant-garde manner. Also, the need to sever ties with former notions is something that is handed down from earlier times, mostly the Romantic notions which the modern so abhors. The only difference that remains is stylistic; but the need to get away from what has been going on is not new in the literary realm. There is a pattern that somehow links

Modernism to prior thought processes even while it tries to completely abandon its past in order to embrace a more objective present. The best example of this can be found in recurrence of a single figure and its implication in the totality of English fiction as formed in the characterization of Ulysses through the ages. The recurrence of the same character in different settings leads to the examination of the deep significance this myth has carried through the ages. Ulysses, therefore, forms the nucleus of many interests for literateurs. This thesis will be an attempt to decode this bond that at some level binds gaps between ages through production of diverse meanings. A look into the inception of Ulysses as a character, therefore, is paramount at this point.

Ulysses as a figure of representation has been moulded into different shapes through the ages. He was the epitome of inspiration in the Homeric era (7^{th} -8^{th} century B.C) ; an encapsulation of meaningful and valorous quests in the Victorian age as shown in the poem by Lord Alfred Tennyson (1842); and finally an embodiment of a fragmented and multi-faceted conscience as depicted by James Joyce (1922). Thus, the predominance of the character of Ulysses in exemplary literary works deserves a thorough observation. What is striking in the earlier portrayals is that Ulysses is shown as a courageous soldier and an unquenchable adventurer. The depiction changes in Joyce where he becomes an ordinary and moribund Leopold Bloom. It is, as though, literature has lost its need to sketch grand and inspirational pictures that go far beyond reality. Thus, the modern Ulysses is shown as caught in trivialities of daily life and is represented as a cuckold. The modernist outlook also comes into play where it is not merely an epic or a poetic retelling; rather it is a mixture of multiple and confusing narrative styles. The challenges that the so-called hero of the novel faces is extended to the challenges of the writer, as

the narration encompasses but never settles on a particular style of writing. This difficulty is further imposed on the reader as s/he struggles to decipher the internal and external cogitations of characters from the multiplicity of modes in the structures of writing. To all of this is added the fact that the protagonist becomes an anti-hero or an inversion of the 'original' Ulysses. Bloom is contrary to Ulysses and yet similar in the sense that both preside over the same continuum of principles, only from opposite ends. While the latter is a warrior undaunted, heroic, confident and adventurous, the former is a citizen who remains cowardly, unsure of his standing in society and one who constantly escapes into an imaginary world in order to seek solace and find a shelter away from morbid reality. There might be, as such, a connection drawn between the citizen and the soldier relationship in correlation to the state as a larger apparatus by further relating it to the "Father and the Son idea. The Son striving to be atoned with the Father." (Joyce 22) Thus a close examination of the relationships between Ulysses-Telemachus and Bloom-Stephen is required in the depictions drawn by Homer, Tennyson and Joyce respectively.

Furthermore when it comes to depictions of a nation or a national imaginary, the figure of the woman plays a great role, and the depictions of the circumstances a woman faces in society become very important. Therefore the roles and portrayals of Molly Bloom and Penelope are equally significant. The former narrations give almost no voice to Penelope where she remains merely an impediment or someone who constantly and tediously needs to be looked after as is aptly surmised in the line: "Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole" (Tennyson l.3). On the other hand not only is there a full last chapter capturing Molly Bloom and her thoughts, there are bits and pieces of her character discussed by Dubliners throughout the story. She is seen as "Madam

Bloom…The vocal muse. Dublin's prime favourite" (Joyce 129). Furthermore her monologue as narrated in the concluding chapter is in a constant flow with no punctuation other than the capitalization of 'I's and the division into paragraphs marking intrusion and transition of thoughts. While her thoughts are subject to the occurrences of the delineated day, it is hardly influenced by any human interactions. She seems alive to her surroundings which can be seen in the reactions to the sound of the train. Mostly her mind seems to be consumed by thoughts of Bloom. The soliloquy contains anecdotes of her many lovers and dwells on her ideas of sensuality. Hence, she seems to be a character unlike any other in her life. Her discrepancies from the societal norms are not something that makes her feel guilty or unsure about herself. She is pretty aware of the other sex as well. Thus as an extension to the nation as a whole, Molly is more independent and decided than the previous Penelopes who were completely subject to the whims, perspectives, heroics and representations of their male counterpart. This does not mean that males deciding for the nation are completely eradicated; rather it means that human frailties are not hidden under false heroics. These shortcomings need to be sorted before a nation like Molly can come to terms with her ordinary husband or citizen Bloom and say "yes I said yes I will Yes" (Joyce 653*).* Therefore the marital relations symbolize the relation of the state with the citizen. Unlike former times, a modern state has already been under the domination of many lovers, that is to say, colonizers. Thus its modulations to the present inexperienced citizens like Bloom remain uncertain yet in juxtaposed cohabitation with the nation where Molly becomes the symbol for the nation and Bloom, the frail and lost citizen.

The aforementioned argument, therefore, can be linked with the Father-Son perspective where history and simultaneously posterity is yet to be established due to the brutal and imperial background. Unlike the context of England and Greece, Ireland is "a servant of two masters…an English and an Italian" (Joyce 24*).* Therefore, where the Ulysses of Homer and Tennyson are free to fight with gods, conquer and colonize everything that comes in their path and justify it by drinking "Life to the lees" (Tennyson l.7), Bloom or Stephen remains within the boundaries of Dublin trying to find a suitable parentage and heir to their fragmented psyches.

All these construe a formation of myth in the manner described by Roland Barthes in his essay "Myth Today". Homer's Ulysses (7^{th}-8^{th} century B.C) is a figure endowed with heroic qualities. He is the carrier of meanings that proliferate in the later writings. The character shifts as an open-ended entity that can be altered to represent many contexts and which yield a different meaning in each recreation or adaptation. Through the generations, Ulysses has somehow developed into a site of inspiration. A sign that defies any singular view of any particular timeline is what this character embodies. Thus he is the epitome of humankind in its finest moments in Homer; a plea to bask in the glory of manliness and human life in Tennyson; a representation of true frailties in Joyce. It sketches, as such, a graph for the human psyche in an evolutionary manner. It starts with a belief in superiority of the human race, develops into a refined understanding of the struggles humans have to undergo in order to survive leading to an existential quandary where advanced knowledge only makes human beings an insignificant part of the greater cosmos.

The paper, as such, is an investigation of these subtle developments in ways that the human psyche is perceived and delineated. Although it is mainly concerned with Western literary transitions, its main aim is to find whether these are simply confined to the thoughts of the writer or are a part of the greater context. This will be done in three correlated chapters. The first will deal with the focus on the father-son relation where posterity and origin has always been a matter of great interest in all the adaptations of Ulysses. The second will analyze the representation of women as a part and parcel of the condition of the nation. Thus Penelope and as a later manifestation Molly are the main concentration of the second chapter. Finally the third chapter is an amalgamation of the former two chapters leading up to the argument of Myth formation as described by Roland Barthes. Each chapter will have scholarly articles to support its arguments. Also the dissertation will end with a reference to Nietzsche and his thoughts on tragedy. The whole concern of a homogenous national identity is seen through Ulysses in all the adaptations and how the constant reiterations emphasize the need to establish Ulysses as a figure of far-sighted and all-encompassing import.

Finally, it is important to note that the oscillation between regimentation of thoughts and a desire to voice spontaneous emotions has been constant throughout literary history. The paper is an attempt to examine this quagmire human disposition finds itself in. What is of central interest to this dissertation, as such, is whether at the end of all the discussions regarding characterizations, narrations and depictions, there remains something primordially human; something that in spite of situational complexities and far-fetched imaginations still is a part of the commonest of human circumstances. As

literature is not only about the artistic ingenuity of the author, its innermost influence lies in an effect on readership which can be seen in giving birth to meanings in daily life.

Chapter 1

Father and Son: Historicity and Posterity

> "All are architects of Fate,
> Working in these walls of Time;"- (Henry Wadsworth, "The Builders")

With the ebbing away of an era, the pathway for another tide of distinctive viewpoints emerges. This leaves an interim that soaks in discrepancies of the previous mindset coupled with the need to allow a new sort of thinking process. Here, then, time becomes the abstraction as the invisible hand guiding and deciding, inherent and impervious as the limitless sea. The aforementioned lines, written in the late 19th century, suggest the futility of time as a carrier and maker of ideas and notions. This growing sense of human mind as insignificant to barriers of time length later gives rise to angst embodied in Modernism from Victorian. It only goes to show the innate superiority humans could never take leave of. With advanced understanding came the need to make one unique to a point where a self becomes incoherent to the surroundings. In this sense, Modernism becomes the belligerent son of Victorian, denying any ties to its predecessor and embracing an inclusive attitude that moves away from its immediate surroundings.

This inclusiveness is captured in narration through the placing of relationships as the core of humans as beings. Especially in the relations between a father and son, there is, maybe, a sense of power; but that actually subscribes to the rules that govern a family or are in operation in the construction of the subjectivity of an individual. The patriarchal tones of this formulation are evident everywhere. It is, as though, the burden of the human civilization is on the shoulders of men as inheritors and ancestors. Women in this

formulation occupy the position of a corollary to the dominant male. From time immemorial this has been the situation and therefore this is the premise on which any argument within a narration is made to revolve around. This quandary will be discussed in the next chapter. As of now, the concern is mostly with describing the links between a male offspring and his male progenitor that are used to galvanize the plot.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to give an analysis of the father-son relationship in the three adaptations of the Ulysses myth by Homer, Alfred Tennyson and James Joyce. Other than the changes in outlook that came as a consequence of the difference in time period, its goal will be to analyze it through a Freudian lens and to show how each provides a symbolic depiction of the patriarchy. Thus the father-son relationship is also a platform to discuss the conceptual approach of the affinity between the past and present. As will be discussed, it is a completely abstract literary theme which becomes symbolic through application. It is abstract as there is no real or immediate impact on the narration rather the understanding paves a way for readers to place it in relation to the time sequence. This reading is an emblematic or symbolic comprehension. Thus Roland Barthes and his deliberations on semiotics as presented in the essay “Myth Today” will be of utmost importance, especially as we read the Modernist rendition by Joyce, as this is where the boundaries between different arenas of being are completely blurred.

The projection of reality through the literary can be seen as regimentation through the ages of styles and formats. Thus before Modernism there are many innovations in stylization such as the oral tradition in Homer and dramatic monologue in Alfred Tennyson. An explanation as to why these formulations are intermingled with the ideals

of that era will also be an important aspect of the chapter. Furthermore, this chapter will also show how in modern times, literary devices are deployed to depict the fragmentation of the psyche and within that to reiterate patriarchal authority.

The Classical Age

In Grecian times, the relation between Homer and his listeners, rather than readers, was established by word of mouth. The listeners and the readers were drawn together in a common polity, and world history has made clear the democratic nature of that civilization. Greeks also patronized the development of art and literature during those times. The oral tradition of passing on stories which are epic and profound in nature thus started in a pre-dominantly patriarchal society. Greek stories remain a part of the classical heritage, and cannot be simply abandoned as the expression of an archaic and outdated world view. Readers can still find meanings or associate symbols in these epics to their own contexts. Also the fact that narration is mostly oral makes it malleable to connotations when it becomes published as a translated piece. There will always be misgivings in translation and transformation from oral to written form; something that will not be discussed here but is worth mentioning. As such it can be a mixture of historical as well as literary anecdotes or a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. This oscillation between truth and imagination is what makes the Homeric Ulysses a part of later deliberations in epochs to come.

The Odyssey as a classic example of a Homeric epic illustrates all the facets relating to the myth. These epics reflect a film of belief in gods or an authority. Everything follows the will of higher powers and the pace is set by "The gods [who] in council sit, to call/ Ulysses from Calypso's thrall,/ And order their high pleasures thus:"

(bk. 1 Homer Argument*)*. The multiplicity of authorities shows the myriad thought processes that are allowed to flourish in this heterogeneous milieu. In turn it also lends an authenticity to the tale that seems to be the crux of the conflict within the epic: that is, the absence of the father leads to chaos.

While Penelope, the wife of the lost Ulysses, remains trapped in this chaos, her son Telemachus is "Griev'd much in mind; and in his heart begat/ All representment of his absent sire" as the wooers of Penelope ransack all of Ithaca (bk. 1 Homer ll.184-185*)*. With the gods watching over, what Telemachus lacks is the origin or more precisely the certainty and the confidence that comes along with the knowledge of the paternal origins. Thus, even when Telemachus is depicted as a strong, almost god-like person, his misgivings about his background make him susceptible to the wooers. This makes him say:

> My mother certain says I am his son;
> I know not, nor was ever simply known
> By any child the sure truth of his sire. (bk.1 ll.-335-337)

His youth and abilities are, as such, burdened with the longing for a loving and worthy father who is a legend in his times. In order to live up to this fame Telemachus seems to have been made powerless by his father's absence as he is "new with life" (bk.4 l.143). There is a developing insistence throughout the epic to summon experience as the mould for youth and its ways. Without it, all Telemachus's youthful energy is not channeled into action and instead is steeped in anguish. Furthermore the vital dilemma is expressed by Penelope in the line: "Did he, it afraid/ To live and leave posterity his name" (bk. 4 ll.948-949).

It is, as though, to create positionality in time one has to be in permanent agreement with the past which guides present acts. Contrarily to Telemachus, Ulysses stands in the light of immense and adventurous experiences. Bearer of the spirit of human glory, Ulysses has "To bear all anguish…The war of men and the inhuman wave" (bk. 8 ll.-250-251). He is the sojourner who encapsulates man in his best form in wit, reason, courage or valor; Ulysses is shown to reign supreme. Everyone tries to follow in his footsteps as the producer of meaning that surpasses the mundane life and looks for depth of understanding even through foolhardy adventures. He is "…Ulysses Laertiades,/ The fear of all the world for policies" (bk.9 ll.-38-39). This confident self-assertion shows a complete and utter knowledge of his identity without the doubts or misgivings that impede action. He is, then, a part of the history that bolsters individual identity which serves to present a firmness of position and is an inspiration for posterity.

When viewed from a psychoanalytic vantage, on the other hand, Telemachus and his identity suffer from a very contemporary ambiguity; that of having a single parent while passing the crucial stage of adolescence. Moreover the parent is of the opposite sex where male identification is pretty much incapacitated. Thus it is Telemachus, the son, who seems to enact the role of the female counterpart than Penelope, his mother. He gives in to tears and expresses how he is "[f]alling", "ruinous" and "immartial" (bk.1 ll. 100 & 104). His anxiety is further aggravated, as Freud explains in one of his cases, "by being suppressed…to higher asexual aims" (84). He is led to believe that his desire to find his father is an honourable endeavour and serves to hide his altered and homosexual perversion for his father[1]. This is also because he shows signs of "inhibited development"

[1] Here the use of the word perversion is in accordance to Freud and his findings on homosexuality and how he perceives it as such. Whether it was considered the same in the Homeric era will be questioned as we go along .

(84) of his mind where, as he declares, he is “denied instant power of wreak” (bk.1 Homer l.131). He is, as such, an absolute specimen of repressed longings for a male dominance in his life.

This attraction is further exposed in later interactions between the father and the son. As has already been mentioned previously, Penelope considers the reason behind Telemachus and his voyage as a fear for posterity. This might be in correlation to his fears concerning impotency due to a lack of phallocentrism in his immediate surroundings. The relation between the father and the son, as such, is a medley of admiration, attraction and apprehension from afar. Ulysses is thus a mythical figure even to his own son: an embodiment of virile male power; qualities that the son can hardly find in himself. This is further emphasized by society, who even when Ulysses comes disguised as a beggar, exclaims: “Through his thin garment what a thigh he shows!” (bk.18 l. 105). Thus it is not a reflection of a crude patriarchy; rather it embodies a society where men are worshipped as figures of power and strength even among their own sex. A man who is well endowed with ‘manly qualities, as can be said of Ulysses, becomes the object of general desire and the son remains a shadow of his father’s accomplishments where all the wooers standing in substitution of his father aggravates his sense of impotency.

The son, as such, idealizes manliness; at times even more than the female counterpart. He is meant to be, as is mentioned throughout the epic, the “god-like” son made or perceived in the image of his father (bk.1 l. 183). The jealousy and reproach towards his mother as he thinks that she is closer to his father is not always quite evident, but can be perceived in lines like the following:

> Her son…blam'd her thus:
>
> Mother, ungentle mother! Tyrannous
>
> In this too curious modesty you show!
>
> …
>
> In infinite suff'rance he had spent apart.
>
> No flint so hard is as a woman's heart. (bk.23 ll. 150-152, 158-159)

The "suff'rance" here might be a direct reference to his misery as well. He simply fails to understand Penelope and her need for distance whereas he himself did not quite recognize his father on his first appearance in Ithaca. As contended by Freud in his *Case Histories I 'Dora' and 'Little Hans'* (henceforth *Case Histories I)*: "There is something undeniably automatic about this method of defending oneself against a self-reproach by making the same reproach against someone else" (67). The statement above is, therefore, a dual identification of Telemachus with the woman as well as the man within himself. He is the bridge between his mother and his father; almost an androgynous amalgamation of them. At this point, Telemachus seems to have finally reconciled his self with the return of his father.

As such, by default, there is an effeminate fear on the part of posterity or youth to question what has been written or recorded in the past. There is a blind dependence on whatever tradition one is handed down; an absolutism that claims ascendance over any doubts. There can be two effects of such a position: bliss in complete ignorance and submission as a result. This has the effect of giving future generations strength of faith and belief. Telemachus becomes the subject that has been conquered: an obedient and god-like being. Such submission is a characteristic that can hardly be gleaned in

contemporary times or the subsequent periods after the Homeric era. With the passage of time, human history has become murkier and uncertain and human beings have lost faith in the beliefs that have been handed down to them, but have gone on to create other and perhaps more artificial constrictions for themselves. As a result, questions have given way to more questions in a never-ending cycle, and with no resolution. Therefore the Ulysses myth, through the ages, shows the hero as lost in the maze of his own cogitations and songs of glory no longer accompany his many travels. Between Ulysses and Telemachus, the son's capacities are embodied in the lines: "Obscure, inglorious, death hath made his end, / And me, for glories to all griefs contend." (bk.1 ll. 377-378).[2]

Here, then, the son strives to seek the glory that the father embodied. For him, the father becomes the body of signs, inspiring and directing at the same instant. His antagonism is largely spurred by the need to ascertain his identity through his father and mark his difference from the multiplicity of his mother's wooers. In this case the relation is direct and has no underlying innuendos. The son is seen as holding on to the vestiges of his patriarchal inheritance. The mother, here, as the object of desire by the multitude, jolts and to some extent mars the legend fostered by the image of his father. The son is passive in the presence of the father but active when he needs to bring him back to his rightful position in society. Furthermore "it is in his heart [he] begat/ All representment of an absent sire" where Telemachus, the character himself, is the one imagining what his father would have incurred on the wooers (bk.1 ll. 184-185).

Furthermore symbolically the formation of Ulysses as a myth is just starting with *The Odyssey.* It is still only the "language-object" or a lingual artifact (Barthes 115). He

[2] This is before he has come to terms with his identity. *The Odyssey* provides no other deliberation on Telemachus after he reunites his parents. It is always in relation to his father.

is for the readers what he might be for the son; a space for inspirational recognition with the brute force exuded by an alpha male figure. What he symbolizes bolsters his identity, and such a figure never suffers from contradictions. Later the wholeness of such a figure may be made more contentious, as he now becomes a symbol of fragmented national identities. Ulysess remains "a concrete entity", even as his son can be seen to occupy the position of a lost citizen (Barthes 113). In this way Ulysses's sons cannot stand in as representations of societies where all is deemed to be right and in order. Society tries to bridge the past with present, the father with the son, and to resolve the inter-generational crisis. In other words, as viewed by Freud in *Case Histories I*, society is "the critical and moralizing factor [of] the super-ego" (Strachey 23), and the maintenance of continuity and harmony of life or at least its façade is the purpose that is served by it. This is something which will be modified soon after as narration will be gradually retracted within the psyche; a shift towards the id and ego from the super-ego.

The epic simply lays down the basis for what is to come later on through, in respect to this paper, Tennyson, Joyce and many more. Ulysses does not here signify a complexity in its meanings. He is "the signifier" or "the acoustic image" which is empty till associated with the "traditional Ulyssean qualities: Courage in action, wisdom in council, eloquence and tact in negotiation…" (Stanford 127) or "the signified"; in other words the concept (Barthes 113). Ulysses becomes a sign through reiteration in later generations "as the relation between concept and image" is moulded to reflect different ideologies in varying epochs (Barthes 113).

Ulysses as a Victorian text

This can be seen in Victorian times, influenced as it is by Romantic notions, where the field of meaning is further exploited as Alfred Tennyson tries to re-visualize Ulysses in his poem "Ulysses" (1842). This poem is a personal exposition where "poems deal with the evolution of a soul, with a man's quest for knowledge through self-realization" (Langbaum 57). From the direct linguistic sense, the meaning starts to shift in order to accommodate a more individual setting. It is not merely a vocalization of what has been expressed but why it has come into being. The whole idea of transforming fantastical tales to a spontaneous portrayal of realizations, of profound inspirations is encapsulated in Tennyson's poem. Dramatic monologue itself, as a style of narrative, presents a search for an "enduring truth, inherent in nature of life itself…embodied in a new tradition, a new Mythus" (Langbaum 12). In that sense, it almost seems like an apt precursor to Modernism as a complete breakaway from preset conditions, only differing in the idea of retaining some semblance to societal regimentation.

Moreover through these realizations the speaker seems to reach a point where life gets a substantial meaning in the line: "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" (l. 7). There is a recurrent yearning to do something worthwhile throughout the poem with hints of an underlying pride. It is as though, with the dying embers of a glory whose vibrancy is long gone, the speaker is trying to revive a forgotten glorious identity. The poem begins with images of a "still hearth", "barren crags" and an "aged wife" (ll. 2-3) and ends with a deification of the self. Thus it marks the advent of individualism and the need for new conquests, as embodied in the development of colonization as an imperial system, where a singular perspective over-rides all others. It demonstrates a desire to establish a particular viewpoint that negates all other aspects. This is in accordance to

what Robert Langbaum says in his book *The Poetry of Experience:* "In Tennyson, however, the longing for oblivion is not a first step…but an end in itself" (89). Thus there is no transition; merely a platform to expose the profound void that surrounds the self. This platform is shown in the particular outlook and the willingness of the audience to relate to the subject where the "particular perspective is the condition…the disequilibrium between sympathy and judgment the consequence" (Langbaum140). Thus Telemachus becomes the means through which a new sense of self is established. Art, becomes a tool for the establishment of individuality, regardless of consequences. It is more of a search for "new things" away "From that eternal silence, something more," (Tennyson l.27 & 28)

The question then is: where does that leave the father and the son relation in Victorian times and its concomitant idea of a past and hope of a future? While the son is kept on the sidelines as a passive and submissive listener, soaking in all that the narrator has to say, the father projects an authoritative and overpowering presence with hardly any consideration for the audience or the son. This shows an absolute confidence in posterity following in the footsteps of its own history. The evolution of the dramatic monologue as a poetic form gives off the aura of an all-consuming system that evokes certainty and optimism at its best. In other words it is on par with how Nietzsche talks about optimism as a "sign of decline, of exhaustion…of the anarchic dissolution of the instincts" (4). Thus the very surety expressed by the narrator in "Ulysses" is an expression of giving up the desire to question, of being too anxious to allow any doubt or questioning to enter. This, in turn, signals a decline of rationality thereby letting go of the very human quality of logical thinking.

The Victorian era, as such, heralds the overall inaction brought by human rationality and advancement towards individuality. The father does not seek a future within the son neither does the son seek an inspiration through the father. The father is omnipotent and irreproachable. From a Freudian perspective, the narration is just for self-gratification which lends to the "organized realistic part [of] the 'ego'" (Strachey 21). There are hardly any oedipal connotations other than a looming fear-desire dichotomy for a youthful posterity where the son is seen as a mere shadow of a worn-out tradition. Old age is idealized in contrast to the Ulyssean virility and strength shown in *The Odyssey.* As the poet contends, "…experience is an arch where through/ Gleams that untraveled world…" (ll.19-20). The style itself coupled with the admiration of the qualities that he sings for himself is almost narcissistic in approach. It leads to the assertion that it is an attempt to project the ego.

There is most definitely no voice given to the son; he is simply: "…my son, mine own Telemachus" who is "…centered in the sphere/ Of common duties" (ll. 34 & 40-41). In other words he lies in contrast to his father with his adventurous and noteworthy actions. The speaker further demeans the work *he* will *leave* his son by saying: "He works his work, I mine." (l. 44). These statements reveal a consistent endeavor to project the ego when the body becomes too frail for fresh adventures. It is not male strength that is delineated here, but an ebbing of strength that sets the tone for the monologue. It is dramatized in its ardent need for adventure on the brink of stubbornness. There is dismissal but no recognition of the son. He remains merely a blind and watered down reflection; almost to serve as the 'other' whose aim is the high appraisal of the degenerate and old self.

It is also an allusion to the inescapable and worn-out traditions of the Victorian era which seems unalterable and is responsible for a general repression of emotions. It is where patriarchy is well-established with its preset notions of male vigor and female subjugation; somehow this direct reflection is also a criticism of the outdated ideological structure. A more concise definition of the ego might shed some light on this assumption: "The ego is always the standard by which one measures the external world; one learns to understand it by a constant comparison with oneself" (Freud 266). The poem, as such, becomes a reflection of a psychological outlook within a narration which both represents and criticizes the established values and mores. It marks the transition of the path of narration from a basic retelling that might lead to formulations to a deciphering of psychical nuances. This kind of stage-by-stage construction of the individual psyche marks the Victorian era, which is completely broken down with the advent of modernism. The Victorian era, with its imperial overreach which is based on both the individual psyche and social repressive methods, still held on to some vestiges of hope where it symbolized how "Death closes all; but ere the end, / Some work of noble note, may yet be done," (ll. 53-54). Here, strikingly, Ulysses enters the metalingual plane. He is

> …this open character of the concept; it is not all abstract purified essence; it is a formless…nebulous condensation, whose unity and coherence are above all due to its function. (Barthes 119)

Ulysses can thus be perceived as a character who is moulded to suit varying contexts and ideologies. The meanings attached to this figure shift and are flexible, assuming changing roles that lead to a criticism of society in contrast to the original myth, which is of a

legendary creation of society in Homeric times. The figure of Ulysses embodies a never-ending and open functionality.

It is only with the realization of oppressive imperial subjugation and the sacrifice of a large number of human lives that the functionality of the Ulysses figure opens up to express a sense of morbidity. In Tennyson's poem, even while he plays the role of social critic, the figure of Ulysses still retains imposing and heroic status, depicting a high-minded self. He reiterates the need for the glories of conquest within a mundane and repressive reality. These only represent a foolhardy and reckless indecisiveness which culminates into Eurocentrism, a justification for colonial expeditions and later the two World Wars, which we now know wreak such havoc that it tears asunder any notions of glory or honour. Where does that place relationships, heroism and the father-son identity?: definitely in shambles. After this examination of the Victorian representation or use of the Ulysses myth we will turn in the next section to elucidate a displaced sense of origin and identification which marks the beginning of the modernist movement in literature.

Fragmentation and Modernism

Modernism can be to have multiple facets and meanings, as well as causes. Literary modernism is a complex phenomenon, as it seeks to manifest a complete disjuncture from its denial of its past, even while being a sedimentation of structures handed down by prior epochs. It sings of novelty in the face of desecration left by war and chaos. Most strikingly its focus lies solely, unlike other times, on understanding the human mind and exploring the individual human psyche. Joycean narration thus uses the stream of consciousness method of narration, which provides it the scope for such an

exploration. It cements the structure of the narrative through a wide and deep description of what goes on in the mind of the character. While the Homeric epic relies on the listener-storyteller relation and the Victorian Ulysses nullifies all voices but his own, by the modernist times, Joyce unravels the phase where the reader-writer relation is well beyond established. It is not only an understanding of the text that matters. The origin of the text in relation to the subjectivity of the context is also emphasized where the artist or the writer is to transcend "beyond the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of light" (Bradbury 25). In other words, a piece of work is a document, albeit fragmented, of a writer seeking truth in the complex quagmire that is modernity. It is a journey that both the reader and writer embark upon.

As such, Modernism seeks to pave its way to the truth of existence through an exploration of human consciousness. There is a need to break free from prudence and a reiteration of social norms, both by readers and writers, as posited by reiterations of values under the garb of liberty infused with established societal values driven by Romantic notions.[3] While the future had been held at bay by the Victorian Ulysses, the modern Ulysses is lost in the predicament of everyday life. His past has already been distorted by the present dissolution of conventions and his future is aimlessly moving about the streets, in the person of Stephen Dedalus, in search of a refuge. Unlike, the Homeric version, the journey of the son is not based on the tracks left by the father. It is mostly characterized by a need for a basic shelter usurped but not as grand as the palace of Ithaca and by the underlying hopelessness of the situation. Moreover the Joycean Ulysses needs to be read as an aftermath to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) (henceforth *A Portrait)* which concentrates on the son, Stephen Dedalus. Thus

[3] See *The Birth of Tragedy* by Freidrich Nietzsche

there is a reversal of places. Stories of the father do not haunt the identity of the son; rather the son is already given a central and concrete place. He is the precursor to the story of the father. It is reminiscent of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex as described by Sigmund Freud in "Dissolution of the Oedipal Complex" where:

> …a conflict is bound to arise between his narcissistic interest in that part of his body [phallus] and the libidinal cathexis of his parental objects. In this conflict the first of these forces usually triumphs: the child's ego turns away from the Oedipus Complex (3).

This shows the advent of Modernism as a moving away from the burden of historicity to the creation of new individualistic spaces that defy the past and formulate a narcissistic present.

An analysis of the nuances in the depiction of Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait,* published prior to *Ulysses,* is necessary. The narration is definitely an odd sort of *bildungsroman,* focusing as it does on the innermost desires of the central character. The conflict between religious disintegration and fanaticism is striking. The character is constantly shown to be oscillating between the two aspects. From a very early age he is thinking of "…God's name just as his name was Stephen" and how God thought of "everything and everywhere" (15). There is an existential tinge to the psyche that evokes the modern rendition of characters that are constantly swamped by the "Nothing" that comes after all of creation (15). It is as though this void is beckoning to the creative mind to fill it out as the ultimate creator has left it blank. It marks a transition from the realistic depiction to the purely symbolic rendition of narration. The writer at this stage is overwhelmed by the mere presence of words as can be seen in the lines: "He wanted to

cry but not for himself; for the words, so beautiful and sad, like music" (26). Moreover these words presented "glimpses of the real world about them", which is in complete contrast to previous notions where words were subject to reality and not the other way round (73).

Here then, the explanation given by Roland Barthes becomes useful in understanding or deciphering the meanings of words. The fact that "[e]very object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state" where meanings can be associated in accordance to the society it exists in or the microcosm the writer creates through his imagination is what Joyce seems to be pointing at in his work (Barthes 109). Thus while the central character in need of associations remains a premise, the signifier, the conditions of courage, valour and glory as prerequisites for heroism, makes way for frailty, ordinariness and a mundane life, the signified. In other words, as discussed previously, the relation between the signifier and signified shifts and makes Ulysses as embodied in Bloom a distorted sign. It almost presents an uncertainty to the reality of the hero who no more equals greatness. He becomes "one of equivalence" (Barthes 112) as decided by the outlook of the narrator on how and what to equate with the image of Ulysses.

Unlike the previous son, Telemachus, Stephen in *A Portrait* describes a father who is anyone and everyone. He says his father is a "medical student, an oarsman…a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past" (Joyce 301). The last two identities associated with the father refer to both the chaotic economic condition of the times as well as to the Ulysses of Tennyson who is glorified, despite the ebbing of past glory and affluence. There is a definite oedipal outlook in how the parental relationship is

construed. Patriarchal control and its ambiguities can be surmised through sentences such as the following:"To establish held up relation between Jesus and Papa against those between Mary and her son" (Joyce 311). These are, as mentioned in *Case Histories I,* "the uncoordinated instinctual trends" known more commonly as the id sublimated by societal, here religious, constructions (Strachey 21). The text invokes the authority of Jesus and his father for absolution but cannot deny the attraction between the son and the mother. The story of *Ulysses* begins from this point forth where Stephen has lost his mother and states: "Mother dying come home father" (Joyce 46). The regimentation of the home seems to be something dependent on the mother. With her absence, the father now assumes the role of power in the household. This shift in father being secondary to mother's authority in modernist times will be discussed in the next chapter.

As of now, what then sets apart the modern relationship between the father and the son is that both are at ease at selecting and defining the nature of this relationship. It is not merely a search it is also recognition of both roles. Therefore, it is not only a breaking of the oedipal framework but also transference of identity that the father bestows upon the son and vice versa. As Wright says it is "a mode of investing persons or objects with positive and negative qualities…" (15). Thus readers see a persistence in both Bloom and Stephen who use mundane and everyday objects for an external projection of inner anxiety. Thus there is a salience attached to Stephen and his "ashplant" and "the soap" that Bloom carries with him throughout the day (*Ulysses* Joyce 52 & 173). According to Kain "…Joyce often invests these items with surprising vitality and significance…" (150). For Stephen the ashplant is a sort of support that is missing from his life because of a lack of substantial authority, and the soap signifies that Bloom

is in need of spiritual cleansing. Both, as such, are haunted by a feeling of having been exploited and rejected: the former as he has no real home and guidance and the latter as he feels that his body and soul are violated as his wife deceives him.

This motif takes a turn to person from object with the mention of the word "Metempsychosis…the transmigration of souls" (Joyce 63). There is now a need to transcend physical reality to attain a connection with a fellow being. Thus, at Dignam's funeral, Bloom seems to be taken with the idea of Power and Cunningham being "Full of [their] son…Something to hand on. If little Rudy has lived" (86). He is also pervaded by the thought of death where he ponders on "The resurrection and life. Once you are dead you are dead" (102). It becomes an inescapable truth for him at this point and he is truly lost with this sense of lack of posterity. He is keenly aware that his father had only left him "[t]he [suicide] letter. For my son Leopold" (Joyce 94). His positionality within the greater cosmos thus seems to be at stake.

On the other hand, in Stephen, this is translated into a more elusive existential crisis. He is for the most part a literateur. Therefore his analysis of Hamlet is a glimpse to how there is a void left by a lack of connection to origin. Moreover he is preponderate on these issues, as Kain says, "…Stephen has a sense of impending destiny" (153). Events leading to the transformation of this "sense" into concrete resolution of the void are also pointed out by him:

> We all know the hide-and-seek meetings and near misses of Stephen and Bloom- en route to the funeral…and at the news office- before their contacts late in the day (153)

As such he says, in the "Scylla and Charbydis" chapter, "Fatherhood in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man…Paternity may be a legal fiction" (196). This assertion is further backed up with sentences showing how a biological father will always be repellant to the son as:

> The son unborn mars beauty: born, he brings pain…He is a new male: his growth is his father's decline, his youth his father's envy, his friend his father's enemy. (Joyce 196)

Here, then, is the oedipal conflict: a father can never fully accept the son; there is no reconciliation in this psychical biological dilemma. The aim of the son is to "get rid of him, so that he might be alone with his beautiful mother…" (Freud 269). There is a definite neurosis here that perhaps finds its political and social manifestation in the upheaval of the impending war.

As such, notions of fatherhood and relationship with the male offspring have to undergo many and random altercations. It is part of a symbolic acceptance on both sides rather than depending on social or on a sense of absolute reality. Thus in Joyce's *Ulysses*, Bloom occupies the position of Stephen Dedalus's father, despite constant mention of the drunkard Simon Dedalus. They come together as sojourners; people who analyze the external and selectively internalize rather than being blindly led by conformities. This can be seen in the examination of Hamlet in chapter nine where Stephen clearly addresses the happenings within the play as among "the dispossessed son", "the murdered father" and "the guilty mother" (Joyce 178). It seems like an accidental slip on the part of the narrator of the story where he defines the central characters, Bloom, Molly and Stephen, through reference to a Shakespearean tragedy as though the narration itself is a reflection of the

play *Hamlet.* It also symbolizes the author playing God to all he has known till now where he is trying to pack it all in this piece in a forced parallel existence. For in reality Stephen is neither a son to Bloom nor did Molly Bloom give birth to him. It is the circumstance that Joyce creates which makes them cross paths and which helps the text to make this family identification. Stephen proclaims this aspect in the lines:

> …the ghost of the unquiet father the image of the unloving son looks forth. In the intense instant of imagination, when the mind…is a fading coal, that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be. So in the future…I may see myself as I sit here now but by reflection of that which then I shall be (Joyce 184).

Thus all the concepts of past, present and future can be interspersed only through amalgamation and summation of all the content the self embodies. The modern person, as such, is characterized by his ability to stand aloof and watch time as a flow viewed from afar. He is aware of the self being violated by interpretation of surrounding words and thus appreciative of what change in time, place and thought offers. The father in such a situation can become the son and vice versa because realization has shifted from sympathy as a tool used in Victorian and Homeric times to empathy in Modern times.

The "possibility" of finding a *suitable* father is what sets the pace of the search. Stephen is not trying to find a male example to follow. It is also a search for the self through others coupled with an effeminate adoration. Bloom is both the counter reflection as well as an androgynous sphere of authority. This is exemplified in Stephen and Bloom finally meeting in a hospital where Mrs. Purefoy is giving birth and Bloom is called the "traveler" (361) and the "reserved young Stephen, he was the most drunken" (364). They

really meet at the verge of delivery, which is unlike Stephen's own birth, where Mr. Dedalus or the father remained an unknown entity. This finds exuberant delineation in the Circe chapter where they are friends in debauchery in the brothel; and also in contradiction to Stephen's premise that a father can never be a friend to the son. Joyce's *Ulysses* uses the Circe chapter to show the intermixture of opposing thoughts between Bloom and Stephen. Both are talking about finding a self that is lost in this chaos of past and present dissonances. Stephen finds resolution in this miasma by going "forth to the ends of the world to traverse not itself…" but to seek a "[s]elf which itself was ineluctably preconditioned to become" (Joyce 444). Bloom also dismisses the shackles of time as a mould for identity when he says that "Past was is today. What now is will then be morrow…" (Joyce 450). They both reach a simultaneous resolution of identity as what will be in accordance to what the self already is. This leads to the conclusion that each while dissenting in their outlook, Bloom more scientific than imaginative like Stephen, will always pursue identical results; making them the ideal father-son duo. It is also evident when the dialogic chapter ends with Bloom talking to Stephen and finally perceiving in him the presence of a silent but expressive Rudy; Bloom's dead son (Joyce 503). Also, Bloom seems to have an emphatic mental declaration in *Ulysses* when he realizes that "O, I so want to be a mother", giving him the potential to bestow effeminate parental love that he himself had been denied with the loss of his mother (438). More than a father, therefore, Bloom becomes a parent to Stephen in its most intricate and rudimentary sense.

Finally the need for nomenclature and concrete outlines to define human actions and events seems to have blurred with the advent of Modernism. It embraced newness

that is not exactly typified by moving away from the past, but by evoking something absolutely out of the ordinary. The negation of the ordinary here does not refer to grandiose sketches; rather to a painting of a landscape that is discovered and seen differently from various perspectives. In Joyce's *Ulysses*, often read as the pinnacle of modernism's narratives, these changing viewpoints definitely prioritize the male gaze, either in the position of the father or the son. Where does that place the female then? Is she an object or the perceived? Female roles as outlined previously broke down into a miasma of uncertainty and formlessness as the modern world did not believe in regimentation handed by tradition. The placing of woman in the human order as a chalice for societal norms and expectations now becomes problematic as she is kept in a secondary position. A modern work as such, in the words of Nietzsche, is in a dilemma "despite it[s] old man's problem, burdened with all the errors of youth" (5). While analysis concerning male consciousness as the ultimate manifestation of humanity is ripe with history, a female psyche is more difficult to explore, as she is consistently characterized by her lack of phallus and therefore of history. The next chapter is thus going to be an analysis of the female counterpart as a symbol in all three depictions of Ulysses and as exemplary of the evolution of the exploration of human relationships in literary works.

Chapter 2

Women in *Ulysses*: Penelope and Molly

"…truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that is what they are"- Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense".

What defines a woman in the most generic sense? In almost all depictions of women, motherhood stands supreme. The concept of femininity has been handed down in all traditions, where it has become a sort of sedimentation which is then difficult to shape in a concrete frame. In accordance to the aforementioned statement by Nietzsche, the concept of womanhood or femininity refers to an origin or a root that cannot be traced. In portrayals of womanhood as reflected in the characters of Penelope in Homer and Tennyson or Molly in Joyce, woman is placed within the ambit of social approval and conventions. It is only in the last non-punctuated chapter of Joyce's *Ulysses* that we find a difference in the portrayal. Otherwise, the woman is either silenced or made a carrier of male values and desires. Thus, as is said in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" by Laura Mulvey, a woman is the bearer and not the actor of meaning. Her identity is a form that "oscillates between maternal plenitude and memory of lack" of not being a male (106).

This chapter is going to unravel the placement given to women in the adaptations of Ulysses in its various avatars, which despite differences, occupy certain common grounds. In none of the versions do we find a clear picture drawn of the female character. Homer's *The Odyssey* portrays Penelope as a part of the general moral frame. There is no argumentation or critical view presented in her utterances; she says only what is expected of her. She remains as the reproducer; a means through which assimilation and

equilibrium of the society is maintained not questioned. Although there is a sort of equanimity given to her which is lacking in later depictions; somehow giving the impression that Homeric times had given a surer placement to women, than what we find in later times. On the other hand, Tennyson's Victorian Penelope is utterly voiceless, leading the reader to wonder if she can at all be given a voice. She is overpowered by the dominant and absolute patriarchal voice of Ulysses, the speaker of the dramatic monologue. Finally the modern Penelope, Molly Bloom, is indecipherable yet gloriously present as a backdrop for the fragmented psyche of modern woman. This gradual decoding and representation of the female entity will be done through the lens provided by Simone de Beauvoir in her chapter on "Myths" in the book *The Second Sex.* Here female identity is shown to be a construction whose origin is too distorted to be recognized and given a form (as is seen in characterization of Molly Bloom). The chapter will also have reference to the periodisation of feminist writing as described by Elaine Showalter and how femininity as a concept is liberated or further convoluted in the process of emancipation.

Penelope in Homeric era: a societal product

The glorification of Ulysses is accentuated as shown through Penelope's longing. Telemachus is portrayed as a great, noble and worthy being, supported by his mother and having no doubts about his identity and actions, except when he has to leave Ithaca in pursuit of his father. This positioning of women as dependable mother demonstrates the functionality of women in Hellenic times. All are allotted their place, according to their age, sex or gender. The epic illustrates the concrete positions given to every human being. Penelope is secure in her placement and does not feel daunted or suppressed; her

only struggle is to keep the wooers at bay. Her inaction may be the source of her powerlessness, but she certainly believes that it is her duty to lie still until someone, usually a male, comes to save her. In other words, she is an archetypal damsel in distress.

Foil to her character is the goddess Calypso who keeps and discharges Ulysses at her will. There are no strictures concerning her actions. Nevertheless, even Calypso voices her desires, saying: "…all thy days are spent in her desire, / And though it be no boast in me to say / In form and mind I match her every way." (bk.5 ll. 277-279). This statement shows her attraction towards a mortal as well as the yearning for morals that guide mortal lives, as something that she misses in her so-called decadent life. As such an examination of the immortal women or goddesses in the story would yield significant results. Their representation may be a means whereby the repressed female psyche that is not allowed expression in the mortal world or in human society may find voice. This dichotomy only emphasizes the freedom and constriction dilemma within the society. While males are allowed and almost deified for being adventurous the female counterpart, if she can be called such, is burdened with what is left behind in the wake of his departure. It is, as though, men can manipulate and re-direct norms according to their advantage where Ulysses has the provision to "[leave] love no rites undone" with Calypso, a goddess, even after professing an undying fidelity to Penelope (bk.5 l. 303). Thus, there is no purity, divinity or distance set between mortals and immortals, other than the fact that immortals have no societal duties or bonds.

This also hints at the "transference" theory as developed by Sigmund Freud in *Case Histories I* (157-158). It points to the relocation of the "psychological experience" (Freud 157) of one body to another in its immediate vicinity or in direct correlation to the

psychological hindrance by "investing persons…with positive and negative qualities, according to early memories…of significant experience" (Wright 15). In Penelope there is a need to emancipate and almost transcend societal strictures, but her mortality binds her to its norms. With an absentee husband and escapee son, she has the full authority to place the state policies and maneuverings to serve her own desires. The power gives her the cherished reprieve from given conditions. Calypso, as she already knows, is the powerful goddess who dictates the incarceration of her husband. This newfound power makes her bask in the same level of independence of manipulating and confining the lives of men; the wooers. On the other hand, as has already been mentioned, the social bonds that restrict her, as well as the so-called feminine desire to feel wanted by and to be loyal to a man are psychic restrictions that even a goddess aspires to. It is not something that is normal to their constitution. Both, then, are readers of lives of each other trying to emulate what the other has and the self desires to have. It might be said that they are bound by the notion of jealousy but that would be too simplistic an interpretation of why Penelope never tried to find Ulysses on her own before Telemachus is spurred by the need for identity or why Calypso simply lets him go at the outset of fulfilling all "rites of love".

On the other hand, it is also evident that being male is not enough. The mother and son relationship seems to demonstrate a framework of counterbalance where one rebukes and at times directs the actions of the other. As is discussed in an essay by Audrey Wen named, "Penelope, Queen of Ithaka: A study of female power and worth in the Homeric society", "The extent of Penelope's authority and Telemakhos' incapability of gaining legal authority has puzzled many, but their extent of authority or lack of it are

linked to each other, one cannot gain full authority in the presence of the other" (21). Penelope and Telemachus both equally participate in matters of the state. In that sense, while Penelope is bound by obligations, she is free in her political thereby economical rights. She does not or cannot give it up to her son. Thus she is described in the lines: "Your mother, first in craft, is first in cause…All she made hope and promis'd every man," which quite clearly arise the question whether this is all a part of her repressed desires which are evident in the lives of goddesses such as Calypso (bk.2 ll. 140 & 143). The desires of the one then find fulfillment in the life of the other, as goddess and mortal woman parallel each other. While one lives with Ulysses in a corporeal/sexual marriage, the other basks in the power vested in her through state and social requirements.

This is very different from the journey that Telemachus takes in order to assert his identity and his royal lineage, which shows him his mimicking the father to gain approval of the mother; a narrative that is clearly steeped in oedipal connotations. There is always a need to assert a certain kind of longing for Penelope, which becomes a part of the male identity in the text. In other words as Wen discusses, "[s]he might not be able to succeed the throne, but she more or less holds the power to decide the next king" (29). Thus despite its strictures on women, Hellenic society shows women as exercising central power, which effects all other aspects of the narrative. Women happily enjoy this power, as classical narratives do not portray women as completely bereft of position and decision-making abilities. Thus she can, at times, decide on crucial aspects of power and especially of coronation and inheritance of the throne. Although there are no direct manifestations of her independence, inherently she becomes the force behind her male counterpart; almost a reason for their actions in her passivity.

This counterbalance framework of male and female cohabitation within a society, where the function of the female facilitates the male and vice versa, seems to have shifted towards the male end of the continuum with the passage of time. She is not even idolized as a semi-powerful goddess or as a queen who has underlying powers to even select and relegate a king. In Victorian times, the female is merely a chattel, a possession or a burden who oscillates among her male guardians. The basis of this is not laid down in the characterization of Penelope or Calypso. It is in Nausicaa that there is found a culpability to surrender to the dictates of society. The fact that she has to dress and bathe properly to attract wooers is emphasized in these lines:

> …Thy fair garments lie
>
> Neglected by thee, yet thy nuptials nigh;
>
> ……Thy good name
>
> Grows amongst men for these things; they inflame
>
> …My society
>
> Shall freely serve thee for thy speedier aid,
>
> Because thou shalt no more stand on the maid. (bk.6 Homer ll. 41-42, 45-46 & 50-53)

This is where the notions of "to-be-looked-at-ness" as discussed by Laura Mulvey is portrayed (847). It is the societal duty of a female to be dressed in the best "attires" in order to gain status and praise, and "her blush" seems to represent the acme of her position and the goal of her life (McCarthy). Against the voiced and sonorous expression of thoughts and feelings of Penelope and Calypso, Nausicaa depicts women in a position of utter meekness and propriety, whose thoughts are expressed only through gestures.

Moreover her actions are modulated by the goddess Minerva. This is where the dynamics of the goddess-mortal relation as projected by Penelope and Calypso shifts from the "transference" and "countertransference" mode to a more direct authority-subject dichotomy (Wright 15). Thus thoughts are taken over by commands which might later result in gradual repression.

Furthermore, the notions of chivalry and honor are also made prominent in this book. When Ulysses addresses her, it is with utmost alacrity that he describes her visage. He thus says: "Nor man, nor woman I did ever see-/ At all parts equal to the part in thee" (bk.6 ll. 239-240). She is the epitome of human beauty distinctive from any other of the same kind as discerned and put in words by Ulysses. He is, then, at once subduing his instinctive need to embrace her as is shown in the scene and is making a far greater impression on her by bearing this control. Also later in Nausicaa's speech, for her "he looks as he had godhead got" and she prays to "heaven" that her "husband were no worse" (bk.6 ll. 385-386). The exchange formulates a mandate for courtship in the Victorian era where maidens are to be well-groomed, passive and agreeable and to willingly and completely submit to men who they idealize. In other words she is to become a part of the male belongings, totally devoid of thought and will.

Thus the reflection of Penelope becomes equally inanimate in Victorian times. Like the "still hearth" or the "barren crag", she is an "aged wife" (Tennyson l. 2 & 3); just a reference to the morbidity of male existence. Socially, economically and politically she is reduced to nothing more than an encumbrance. This development came about gradually with the ascendance of the male-oriented centre of imperial power. In order to create a society which hardly patronized any frailty, women were locked within domestic

walls where the outside world remained a mystery to them. Thus the representation of women of the Victorian era is confined by social dictates and women's struggles constantly thwarted.

Penelope as voicelessness

As Simone de Beauvoir says in her chapter on "Myths" in *The Second Sex,* "[e]ither she appears simply as a purely impersonal opposition, she is an obstacle and remains a stranger; or she submits passively to man's will and permits assimilation, so that he takes possession only through consuming her…destroying her" (171). This is the position that women occupy in many literary, artistic and ideological reiterations where submission and passivity form the unmentioned code of feminine conduct. In literature, which is really a reflection of reality, readers perceive a dichotomy between rejection and acceptance of such norms in female protagonists. The real depth, the quest for knowledge and the search for truth is all bequeathed to the man. It is his duty to "strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" or his task to transcend as outlined by Beauvoir while women remain a secondary and immanent being constantly defined by men (Tennyson l. 70). Thus in Tennyson, Ulysses is shown as a man seeking a release from his everyday torpor which is also partially symbolized by the decrepit woman in his life; someone who weighs down his aspirations and prevents him from reaching fulfillment. In other words, she is a myth that "projects his hopes and his fears towards a sky of transcendence" as expressed by Beauvoir (174). Mostly Victorian women encapsulate the fact that "they still dream through the dreams of men" where they are unable to speak for themselves or somehow provoke society to acknowledge their true condition, other than through marriage (174). Thus Penelope in Tennyson's poem can only be glimpsed through the

chinks and crannies of Ulysses's deliberations. Unlike her Homeric predecessor, she has no semblance of power; she is the ultimate other to the superior male self.

Thus there is a definite need to modulate nature in accordance with the dominance of men. For the patriarchy, then, women and nature are equated, as they posit a similar mystery where both engender attraction and fear. This gives them a strange power over men, and it is in order to conceal his weakness and the precariousness of his power, that man feels the need to create a space that is both divorced from nature, and to create social and familial ideologies that keep feminine power at bay. Hence the needs to create the mythical realms that undergird the norms of patriarchal society; picking up on nuances from reality and modulating them in order to establish male superiority. In the colonial atmosphere reflected in Tennyson's poem, the imposition of this make-belief space is necessary. Women are shown as the weaker sex, a hindrance and a burden for men, with no higher humane attributes. This stereotype is further harnessed through literary and idealistic portrayals constructing a tightly knit society that can hardly ever go beyond the given framework. The idea of a woman thus becomes a sign, as defined by Barthes, with multiple meanings pertaining to the patriarchal order. It outlines the roles that women perform in a superfine manner where the "*myth* [woman as sign of patriarchal domination] *hides nothing:* its function is to distort, not to make disappear" (Barthes 121). In other words, it is the core conquest of the patriarchy to conquer the other or the woman which ensures the success of the system. It is where "…muteness is the condition of the silent, uncomplaining woman- an ideal of patriarchal culture" (Bordo 753). This has been insinuated gradually through literature, history, ideals and practices which later

expand into colonial structures where the world beyond the imperial centre becomes the ultimate other; something equally conquerable.

As such, the representation of Ulysses in Tennyson's poem evokes the search for 'truth' through the undying spirit of adventure at the cost of the female subject who is not even named in this version. Her presence is defined by her lack of manhood. At the turn of the nineteenth century, these notions were intermittently being given a new shape with the advent of a fresh examination of the female psyche in the literary and ideological field, where woman becomes the embodiment of the break from prior norms. This occurs in three decisive phases as discussed by Elaine Showalter:

> First there is a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes…and *internalization* of its standards of art…Second, there is a phase of *protest* against these standards…and *advocacy* of minority rights and values…Finally, there is a phase of *self-discovery*, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity (274).

This explanation seems to capture the changes in female representation as well as the change in reading female characters over time. Thus the third adaptation of Penelope, here Molly Bloom, becomes convoluted and unreachable. She has already passed the internalization and rebellion phase and has now embarked on the self-actualization stage. In that sense, her presence becomes more of a heresy or guesswork for the readers as well as the narrator.

Thus, a brief meandering into the Joycean notions of women in general prior to *Ulysses* becomes imperative. Moreover what is handed down from the Victorian to the Modern is the female positionality on the periphery with no voice, always cooped up in

their household and thinking incoherently as their ties to their own selves are severed through social impositions. The modern woman, therefore, has silence as her heritage. She also has hysteria as a reiterated notion assimilated with her identity as "the term *hysterical* itself became almost interchangeable with the term *feminine* in the literature of [the Victorian] period" (Bordo 749). This psychological dementia is not only associated rather imposed upon the female as a physical entrapment that leads to complete dissolution of the self for the society at large. As Breuer explains in *Studies on Hysteria*:

> Hysterical phenomena…is no longer colored with affect and no longer marked out among other ideas and memories…the discharge follows the 'principle of least resistance' and takes place along these paths whose resistances have already been weakened by concurrent circumstances. (Breuer 284)

It signifies how hysteria more than a problem with psychical aspects is dependent on physical surroundings and re-enactment of those conditions. It also gives lack of resistance as a basic impetus for such mental debilitation. Thus the construction of female subjectivity works in opposition to her surroundings, which feed on her fear of protest. It pushes her back towards the interstices; the corner or the periphery of the patriarchal society. This interstitial existence is what Joyce tries to project in his depiction of the Penelope figure, as he gives it its modernist portrayal.

Penelope as the Modern

Joycean women can be characterized by their propensity to wait. Every narrative that examines female subjectivity tries to link it to its origin; a sort of past. This need to provide a background for every subject under scrutiny is a particularly male predilection

or tendency. Men seem always to bear a burden of tradition; and which finds expression, leaking out as it does into female subjectivity. It might also be suggestive of the modern feminine need to find a new mother with a more substantial voice; something that will be discussed in the course of this section of argumentation. Femininity, mostly in modern times, has been haunted by the statement made by Helene Cixous: "I didn't open my mouth, I didn't repaint my half of the world" (415). Modern femininity, like most modern mandates, visualizes a prospect to stand "at odds with tradition" (Cixous 417). Only outside the conventional periphery can the essence of femininity survive.

This, then, is the basis that sets pace to the character sketch made by Joyce in his many deliberations on women. Before delving into the characterization of Molly Bloom, a brief and succinct observation of the pattern that female characters follow in Joycean tradition needs to be done. Thus the ensuing paragraphs is going to give a short analysis, relevant to the culmination of Molly Bloom, of the character of Eveline and how women are addressed in general in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This will be done in the light of the theories adumbrated in essays by Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Susan Bordo. It will also contain an elaboration and interlacing of the portrayal of women in the Homeric era mostly in connection to the portrayal of Molly Bloom. The central theme of myth formation as discussed by Beauvoir in its feminist aspect and by Barthes from a lingual and metalingual plane, is also essential to this examination.

The first anecdote is that of "Eveline" in the short story of that name. Its pithy and concentrated nature makes it a good starting point. Central to its narration are her thoughts prior to the elopement and the event itself, which depicts a subtle move away from the authoritarian patriarch. In brief, this story seems to be about the struggle of

emancipation and feminine freedom, and in its deliberations gives relevant arguments justifying the need for such struggle. However, by the end, Eveline is struck by her the inability to break away from social norms. Here, then, is a theme that is recurrent in Joycean women; the need to remain indoors and not cross the threshold to unknown realms. More than half of the short story is spent with Eveline, sitting beside a window with cretonne curtains, thinking. She has been defeated so many times that winning becomes a fearful prospect. As is shown in the narrative, for her it is "…a hard life- but now that she was about to leave she did not find it a wholly undesirable life" (Joyce 2). There is a definite tone of unwillingness even while the elopement is being debated:

Why is there this sense of "immobilization"; this pause (Benejam)? The need to keep the self intact with all its subjective facets is what marks this hesitation to move to places unknown. It is through this fear that patriarchy has persisted for so long. As Beauvoir points out:

> There is a double demand of man which dooms woman to duplicity…he fancies her as at once servant and enchantress…the women, themselves sinners in the secrecy of the bed, are only the more passionate in the public worship of virtue…Fear is always attached to woman's licentious conduct. (221-222)

Thus it is the fear of a loosening of social mores, and a falling away of the seams sewn through a long history of female identity formation that helps to tighten the rules that govern women. Thus a woman always finds herself confined within a given boundary; a comfortable, no thoughts attached and numbing line that is comparable to the sea beyond the outline which Eveline cannot cross. It is the oblivion that lies beyond society; the

ocean of unknowability. It represents the conflict between the biological and societal realities that has marked feminine subjectivity for so long. This is comparable in the action of waiting as opposed to immobility. While there is a search for the true feminine identity, there is also the fear of losing a feminine 'essence' that has been established through the ages.

The identity crisis of the modern woman is shown in Eveline's desperation to escape while "…the seas of the world tumbled about her heart" (Joyce 3). She is always in a binary; a division where "'She' is indefinitely other in herself…the reason she is called temperamental, incomprehensible, perturbed, capricious" (Irigaray 440). As shown in the previous section, the figure of woman is used to project social realities. Thus in a fragmented, confused and pluralistic modern society where man and his needs have undergone drastic changes, the female psyche finds itself in a quandary. She becomes further withdrawn and impenetrable. She is caught in a scene which renders her immobile and her thoughts find no avenue for expression. A liberated woman, on the other hand as Irigaray suggests, is someone who "is a sort of universe in expansion for which no limits could be fixed…" (441). Eveline is just the opposite; she is more of a universe in retraction who imbibes all that surrounds her as a microcosm. She is the symbol of all the restrictions that have been imposed on her. As such, she is more of a Nausicaa than a Penelope, standing inert on the shores of a sea. Thus she acts as a foil to the character of Molly Bloom.

For Joyce, in *A Portrait,* women hold the place of a muse. It is a *bildungsroman* where the growing Stephen imbibes artistic and ideological fodder from women with whom he interacts in real life or through texts. The first of these exchanges occur with his

mother and Dante Riordan. It is when Dante and his mother speaks in unison that Stephen feels the impulse to break into a sort of poem in his mind: “Pull out his eyes,/ Apologize,” (4). He seems more at ease with women in his life where he “longed to be at home and lay his head on his mother’s lap” (11). This initial sense of reprieve that is associated with the mother gradually shifts where his mother becomes a stranger. On his return from school he starts questioning his mother’s caress and adoration. This is a proven turn of the oedipal complex where the demands of society, here through the dictums of the school, obliterate its development. This does not necessarily show that Stephen’s perceptions of women who become a source of overwhelming insights to the world around him stops. Thus Dante Riordan is the embodiment of freedom, as she is able to express political, social and religious opinions. She is not afraid of saying whatever is on her mind neither does she shy away from interrupting what seems detestable to her. Moreover she becomes an absolute inspiration in her protestations against Mr. Dedalus’ ideas; almost challenging the authority from little Stephen’s perspective. Although she does seem a bit biased towards the system, she is independent enough to voice her thoughts unlike previous representations of women (34-36).

In general, though, Stephen uses femininity as a core component which provides the foundation for many of his artistic ideas. He refers to his soul as a ‘she’ and God becomes the male authority to whom his soul submits. He also recognizes that it is in the body or flesh that marks the feminine susceptibility to sin. He, even, prays to the “Three Persons through Mary in the name of her joyful and sorrowful and glorious mysteries” (182). Thus it is also through a woman that he wants to transcend his mortal agony and reach salvation. Therefore he always draws a feminine boundary for himself, which could

be the effect of his creative androgynous[4] self. As such, Stephen, and to a certain extent the narrator, is never unaware of the female presence in his soul, as either a muse or Mother Mary. The stirrings of a new "instinct…subtle and hostile, [which] armed him against acquiescence" is thus an expression of a kind of a feminine conflict within Stephen's self (199).

Some previous female characters in Joyce can be seen to herald the emergence of Molly Bloom as a representation of the modern female. In *Ulysses*, the narration starts with an allusion to the sea as a siren calling Stephen with "A voice, sweettoned and sustained…It called again…Usurper" (27). Femininity as muse and inspiration has already been established. This narrative further emphasizes femininity as an unbound sea; formless and unreachable in its mysteries. It also castigates women for male frailty as "…woman brought sin into the world…A faithless wife brought strangers to our shore" (38). Therefore through transference of guilt, here fall from grace as well as defeat at the hands of intruders, men try to attain salvation and transcendence. Let us look briefly at what Beauvoir says about women's positionality at this stage.

According to Beauvoir, man tries to possess women "…through consuming her-that is, through destroying her" (171). There is a sense of brutality in such possession; something that is not echoed in Bloom even as he is cuckolded. Molly is the embodiment of "…the Woman-Mother [who] has a face of shadows; she is the chaos whence all have come and whither all must one day return; she is Nothingness" (179). As such, there is a certain duality attached to the idea of femininity. Woman is both the redeemer of the fallen man and acts as his Other resulting in fearful reflections of the male Self. This is upended in *Ulysses.* Molly is presented as an ensconced character who prefers self-

[4] See *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf.

incarceration where her husband performs all his duties and even discusses her other paramours and their letters. Therefore, her duality originates from her own preference. It is not merely something imposed by society. Her husband knows for a fact that "[she] understand[s] what [he] say[s] better than" his understanding of what he says (*Ulysses* Joyce 54). Thus Bloom has acquiesced of his frailty in relation to his female counterpart at the outset of his introductory chapter, Calypso. The chapter also shows a lot of overlaps between the cat and Molly referring to her animalistic appetite for life. This appetite is in contrast to Bloom's passivity. People around them comment on the couple by stating: "…what did she marry a coon like that for" (Joyce 103). Thus rather than viewing the female and her lack, here of fidelity, the modern times is concerned with the male shortcomings. This is the premise to the story of Molly who is mostly hinted at through deliberations of her husband and heresies of Dubliners. She is after all the celebrated soprano; holding her tower and dictating the weakened Bloom in his thoughts and actions. It is a struggle between the tyrannical wife and the subservient husband. He leaves at the end of the chapter to mark his freedom or a need to escape her dominance just as Ulysses leaves Calypso in Homer's epic but for different reasons and in a dissimilar manner.

Thus as the story progresses so does Bloom and his thoughts about Molly develop as he seeks reconciliation with her. He starts off by thinking about "Molly. Milly. Same thing watered down" (Joyce 86). In other words he projects his neutralized view on women in his family by homogenizing them. This is contradicted by one of Stephen's statements when he says: "Will any man love the daughter if he has not loved the mother" (185). Gradually it signals towards his need for Molly and through her of all

women when he says: “Is there anything more in him that she sees?” (89). Even in Dignam’s funeral what emerges as salient is death truly occurs when a man can “…lie no more in her warm bed” (Joyce 99). Thus their relation is death-like where the language of silence becomes their only medium of exchange. Silence thus is no longer only the property of the woman as seen previously, it also, in this narrative, shows the lack in the man. Bloom’s thoughts then shift from wife to motherhood, with which he associates Molly Bloom.

The struggle, in the narrative, keeps precipitating as Bloom says “…after Rudy”, the son whose death has created a distance between the two but on this particular day it is different (158). He thinks of motherhood in a different light. The need to blame Molly for Rudy’s death gives way to other realizations. It is while walking among the graves that he comprehends that “[o]nly a mother and her deadborn child [is] ever buried in the one coffin…To protect him as long as possible even in the earth” (Joyce 106). Now he delves into past memories where he remembers Molly’s willing acceptance of him as “[a]ll yielding she…kissed [him]” (166). There is a sense of growing possession and jealousy. Through Bloom’s internal changes, the readers can see how Molly is “…a whole composed of parts that are whole, not a simple partial object but a limitlessly changing ensemble” (Cixous 425). It is, therefore, not a change in Bloom that is seen rather a consistent transition taking place in the idea of Molly Bloom. As more than a character she is an idea that pervades the narrative.

Moreover, Molly develops as a character through her foil Gerty McDowell in *Ulysses*. While Molly breaks norms, Gerty signifies the blind belief in system and idealism; a stasis or an expanse that holds no revealing changes among her male

counterparts. She is, as such, objectified. In her chapter, aptly named "Nausicaa", she is "…pronounced beautiful by all" (Joyce 329). Her cogitations are full of superstitions regarding her clothes and the leap year. She is an idealist in matters of love and proper social conduct as both are key features of femininity. Thus she believes that "…he who would…win Gerty MacDowell must be a man among men" (332). Her collection of accessories, "her girlish treasure trove, the tortoiseshell…her alabaster pouncetbox and the ribbons to change", signifies her materialistic pride more than her critical awareness of the reality around her (343). Thus Gerty becomes a representative of the internalization of the social expectations and norms of femininity. These are the ideas that regulate and guide her actions. For her, "…there was meaning in his look" (337). She created a whole saga of romance through unspoken expressions transforming Bloom into her "dreamhusband" (338). She affirms her allegiance to patriarchy by referring to herself as a "womanlywoman…a haven of refuge for the afflicted [men]" (338). Thus she can be equated with the ornament which she cherishes so dearly and she is shown to share "more intimately in nature and at the same time remove[d]…from the natural…to lend to palpitating life the rigour of artifice" (Beauvoir 190). This artifice is exposed in the latter part of the chapter through Bloom and his intentions toward Gerty and her idealistically amorous conceptions of the exchange.

The romance Gerty imagines between Leopold Bloom and herself and her emphasis on subtle exchanges of gestures only causes Bloom to become "wet" (350). Instead of romance, Leopold Bloom imagines a sexual relationship. For him, there is no idealized or abstract love; rather there are selfish motives and a physical gratification and a sense of triumph. As Bloom says the knowledge of "[t]aking a man from another

woman" gives women victorious jubilation, representing only an urge to conquer (349). Moreover for him she represents a "[j]ilted beauty", a "[c]uriosity like a nun or a negress…" succinctly an anomaly (Joyce 346). Gerty even in her submission to societal rules of propriety demonstrates a duality. Complete submission is also viewed as problematic because man wants a challenge that reminds him of his superiority over nature and pride of possession. Gerty's spinsterhood represents the unconquered virgin; thus an anomaly as far as notions of fulfilled femininity is concerned. As Beauvoir says a virgin "…unsubdued by man…who have escaped his power, are more easily than others regarded as sorceresses…if she escapes the yoke of man she is ready to accept that of the devil" (187). She is also a mystery in her passivity. Molly digresses from this trajectory by being frank and unrepentant about her transgressions. Her wait is much more complex than that of Gerty, who is "always waiting to be asked" (Joyce 332). Unbridled activity makes women an indomitable force of nature that cannot be subdued thereby a cornucopia of meanings. While Molly depicts infinity, Gerty is the subject in chains yet equally impervious in her quiet subservience. She also stands in diffidence to Nausicaa in not merely being a virgin but a spinster. She is attractive because of her strangeness not for her ornamentation alone. A modern woman even in conformity is contrary to prior supplication in women. She is just as feared and desired in her passivity as the woman, here Molly, who is active and elusive.

Thus the last chapter of the book embodies the modern, as the chapter is named, "Penelope". Its form, an unpunctuated monologue, signals to the feminine alienation from the world, as well as the constrictions in which femininity is bound. It is a symbolic representation of melancholia. Thus from the heritage of anxiety the female, the feminine

and the feminist sets off towards the expanse of melancholia. This is not to sound morbid. As Kristeva contends, in "Writing the Melancholic": "Melancholy is amorous passion's somber lining…from which our ideals or euphoria break away as much as that fleeting lucidity which breaks the trance entwining two people together" (5). The loss of Rudy or the son has already changed the dynamics of the relationship between Leopold and Molly Bloom. While Bloom altercates mentally with himself in his sojourn through Dublin, readers can infer from this chapter how Molly feels about him. Both seem to be in a state of melancholia. Bloom oscillates between sympathy and hatred for Molly and his position as a cuckold coupled with a shared sorrow for the loss of their child through a "complex dialectic of idealization and devalorization [sic], both of oneself and the other…" (Kristeva 16). His changes in thoughts about Molly are noteworthy. He incorporates Molly and makes her a part of himself in the Circe chapter, where a process of identification takes place in Bloom's unconscious in a dialogic manner, as he argues with himself. Here he is referred to as the "new womanly man" (Joyce 437) and he proclaims: "I so want be a mother" (Joyce 438). Thus he reaches a conclusion to his end of the melancholia where Molly the origin of the detriment is trapped in her four-poster. The fact that he has reached a point of reconciliation is also later revealed in the chapter named Eumaes. He finally deliberates "…the simple fact of the case was it was simply a case of the husband not being up to the scratch…then a real man arriving…strong to the verge of weakness…to her siren charms" (Joyce 539). This alludes to Molly as a mystery, as the one not understood. It is also a symbolic sign of transference of male psychological trauma onto the body of women, resulting in the entrapment and confinement of women to the domestic sphere.

The formless sea of words in this chapter symbolically refers to Molly's imperviousness, making her a typical modern female character in this text. It also comes after a narrative that confidently boasts of incorporating all narrative forms and structures within it. As the narrative looses all bounds and constraints at this point, it becomes emblematic of the formation of the modern female character, who crucially cannot be bound by previously concocted structures. The chapter expresses itself through silence and with a picture of Molly lying prone; another allusion to her melancholia but not in the grim sense with which Bloom follows its dictums. She is definitely not an imitator. In her silence she is both the subject and the signifying. She becomes central to the signifier-signified dichotomy where she is, in "The System and the Speaking Subject", "an *ego* which has momentarily broken off its connections with that externality, which may be social, natural or unconscious" (Kristeva 27). Readers hear her talking about jealousy and amorous rendezvous with complete abandon. There is no shame or barriers in her reminiscences; not hesitating to calls her servant "that slut that Mary" because of her suspicions concerning her husband (*Ulysses* Joyce 615). There are references to her many paramours and what she liked about each. She likes Boylan and his strength and how "Henry Doyle…never knew how to embrace well like Gardner" (Joyce 622).

Thus Molly is the embodiment of the dissolution of myth as defined by Roland Barthes. In being a language-object of the patriarchy, doubly uttered on the meta-lingual plane with a stream of metonymy to the metaphor of a woman, Molly Bloom is juxtaposed with the preconceived femininity. She is a faithless wife who is unapologetic for her enjoyment. She is a mother who has lost a child but fails to see the logic in a continued mournful existence which is expected of her. Meanings attached to her thus

become the signified, and she as the signifier makes way for a new dimension of the sign she is predestined to represent. She forms a new mythus where she "hides nothing… [her] function is to distort, not to make disappear" (Barthes 121). She is the "repository of rarefied meaning…open to the whole of History" (Barthes 120). Contrary to the dictates of propriety, she "hate[s] that pretending" (Joyce 626). Although Bloom's thoughts about her present "…brief identificatory embraces, she goes and passes into infinity" in the end of the story with the need to wait almost forever (Cixous 426).

Also, contrary to her male counterpart, she does not think of the other sex as homogenous; "theyre all so different" for her (Joyce 620). This heterogeneity in correlation to her silence vouchsafes for a profundity "in the privacy of this silent, multiple, diffuse tact…[she is] thinking about…nothing. Everything" (Irigaray 441). On the other hand, all of this is happening on a bed with no real outward action on her part other than her inner cogitations. Through this the narrative "…romanticizes the hysteric's symbolic subversion of the phallocentric order while confined to her bed" (Bordo 754). Even so, she still remains comparable to Eveline or Gerty, as she is made to wait at the end of her emphatically unstructured chapter albeit for different reasons. Despite the overwhelming digression that this chapter represents she is forced to emphatically state that "we[']re to be always chained up" (Joyce 648). Even in her complete abandonment of societal norms she finds herself caught up with how "there was no love lost between [them]" thereby alluding to Bloom and her relation to be a matter that still rankles her being (Joyce 637).

Female characterization, therefore, is both about liberty and incarceration. As Molly portrays, it is not divorced from the "…relation of the two sexes…of struggles"

(Beauvoir 223). Each transfers onto the Other lacks and frailties of the Self. If woman is not free of man's dictates, man is not free from desiring and fearing her simultaneously. He more than her, transfers all sorts of signs onto the female body in order to satiate his imaginary, physical and mental requirements and palliate his fears. While confining and suffocating for the female psyche, it nevertheless empowers them, as can be seen through Molly's belligerent search for freedom and happiness. She might be the "exchange-value among men" but she is equally revered in Dublin; sometimes in contrast to Bloom (Irigaray 442). In her immanence she maintains her integrity more than the transcendence that men seek to achieve. She achieves a kind of ultimate liberation, more than the men surrounding her as "those who are locked knows better than their jailers the taste of free air" (Cixous 425).

Females, as such, embody a space for transcendence through which men seek a motive or solve a lost cause. This is done while she remains an utter mystery with a constant presence in the male understanding of the surroundings. She is boundless and elusive where there might be a whole body of meanings that can be ensuing from her complete subservience which leads to an incorporation of the society that confines her. More than the societal norms, man finds the binding of the settings around him inherent within his female counterpart through nature as her reflection and society as her encapsulation and vice versa. Knowledge and conception of ideas are all as such a watered down representation of this transcendence through women. By giving Molly an unbound chapter even the narrator is trying to be free of his structural bindings. The interpretation and status of women, therefore, in a society marks the basic nuances of the general psyche. She is encoded within the inception of nation, nationality and all other

libertarian ideas as a consequence of modernism. The next chapter, as such, is going to be an attempt to decode this state of transcendence narrators attain through their work of art and creation. An author, mostly in modern times, always try to project a novelty; a new mythus. It is, also as such, in the forthcoming chapter that distinction will be made between changes that took place in narrative styles and why.

Chapter 3

Myth and Identity Formation: Ulysses and the Modern Man

> "As Humpty Dumpty said, words *can* mean anything we say they mean"- Bruce Mazlish, "Crossing Boundaries".

The fluidity of meanings and the uncertainty of signification is a concept that collides with the desire to fix meanings and the search for truth and of 'correct' readings. Myth formation, as will be discussed in this chapter, is a process whereby ideas and concepts are given artistic form, and which then act as sources of inspiration through time. The previous chapters followed the father-son relationship and how this is deployed in the construction of a history of patriarchy and its norms and ideals. The analysis, through psychoanalytical concepts, tried to decode the ramifications of the past on the present and vice versa. It is the relationship between characters that is given attention in prior chapters. Through the centering and an analysis of the female characters, Penelope and Molly, even though they play peripheral roles, the changing position of woman in patriarchal societies, is brought to the fore. When viewed from afar, *The Odyssey* and *Ulysses* seem structurally similar, showing that even as circumstances, themes and societal perspectives might have shifted, the overall need for structure remains.

This chapter will be an elaboration of aspects present in both the Homeric and Joycean depiction of Ulysses as a representative figure of their epochs. Conceptual frameworks provided by eminent theorists such as Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida form the basis of this analysis, and Malcolm Bradbury's and James McFarlane's accounts of modernism in literature have been of immense help in formulating my ideas. This chapter will, as has been done in other chapters as well, reiterate the importance of myth

formation by concentrating on the two manifestations of the Ulysses myth, the Homeric and the Joycean, separately. This will help to extend the character analysis and their contribution to myth formation within the narrative that has already been explored in previous chapters. Tennyson's *Ulysses* will not, unlike other chapters, form a large part of this analysis. Although it will lend a scope for comparative ground or an in-between transitional space where nuances of both can be seen where Homer is the reference and Joyce is the repercussion. It is a concluding note that amalgamates both in its concise and dramatic style.

The chapter thus deals with the changes in narrative styles and its significance in literature. It brings into focus the dramatic differences between modernity and Homeric times. The timelessness of *The Odyssey* is amply visible as it provides inspiration to poets and writers over the ages. *Ulysses* by Joyce, on the other hand, seems to be a deconstruction of that inspiration. It upends the need for grandeur and the artistic fodder seems to rest on trivialities. Despite differences, the insistence on structure is remarkable, pointing to the fact that artistic renderings and decoding of myths are not only unique and eccentric to the author and times, but something which contains the multiplicity of styles and modes of writing that have accumulated through time. Modernism, then, guides our attention more towards the process of creation than the content of the narrative. On the other hand, the oral narrative tradition of Homeric times means that many of such retellings of the myth may be lost and we can assume that the extant versions that have reached us as a record of the appreciation by the audience. Thus for the epic poet audience appreciation was all, and he had to pander to the desires of his audience. On the other hand, the modern artist does not cater to the individual ego or psyche, but shows it

as filled with the debris of war and calamity, thus concentrating not on the popularity of the text but to the sense of fulfillment that the writer gets in its creation. His or her concentration is not on glory but a sense of crisis that needs to be eradicated by the means of individualistic search for meaning.

The Lingual plane: Homeric Ulysses

The Homeric era is about the lack of patent and authenticity. The Hellenic era as also known as the Homeric era shows an inability to mark any other narrator with equal prominence. There is anonymity even in this elevation to immortality in Homer himself where his whereabouts are hardly traceable. Thus *The Odyssey* as presented by Homer, later translated by George Chapman (1857), is charged with an elevation of characters to godliness as well. This is done to make them seem larger than life and surpass the imagination of the immediate audience, and unintentionally, of the readers to come. Readers of English literature constantly encounter symbolic and direct reference to gods and characters as sketched by Homer. Homeric epics have constructed a world that has become immortal in the fullest sense. This is a dream come true for any writer; be they romantic, pragmatic or modern. In other words, as Stanford says in his essay, "The Ulysses myth has had a continuous life for almost three thousand years" (125). Not only in works that directly name an affiliation to the central myth, as is done in the primary texts of this thesis; but since the Renaissance, literary works are full of references to characters and symbols attached to Homeric narrations. Some of these are mentioned in the essay referred to above.

The Homeric creation of art is mostly by way-of-mouth. It follows an oral tradition that gave way to an interactive relation between the creator and the audience.

Art, itself, becomes a requirement in such a setting due to a growing curiosity for knowledge in the advanced Hellenic civilization. The individual mindset is fraught with the need for understanding more of the world around. An oral tradition becomes a fulfillment of this need. As Kirk says, this was mostly because: "…the ability to read and write was far from universal" (1). This means an artistic endeavor could only be propagated orally as understanding of the written text was rare in this context. Also Homer as an elusive character remains to tease the minds of scholar even to this day and shows how epic or any such lyrical and entertaining creation of art were mostly communal. There was no need for a modern-day notion of authenticity or authorships. Its popularity is marked by its retelling by how famous the poet, writer or narrator became.

Moreover Kirk says:

> …the oral poet behaves quite differently from the literate one, because he accepts without question the groundwork of traditionally perfected phraseology, and indeed of traditional theme-structures, and makes his own contribution above and beyond that level. (4)

Thus Homer and his epic is mostly an accumulation of words uttered and performed in accordance to the traditional lingual structure provided by his context. His artistic ingenuity lies in making it more rhythmic and giving it a new cadence. Other than that, the oral tradition remains intact in his work. It had to be performed orally as it could not have been entertaining enough if just recited among a group of onlookers. It also had to follow the prevalent social and cultural norms as it had to convince and enthrall an immediate audience. The epic is sedimentation of spoken words modulated to suit listeners. Thus its enormous length reflects the above statement, and is not a reflection of

the preoccupations and doubts of an individual writer. Moreover, "…*The Odyssey*…documents… the national past" (3). In other words in addition to being literary it was also held as a record of past occurrences for the listeners.

A piece of criticism by Aristotle, one of the very first literary critics of genres of styles and narratives, seems salient at this point. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle calls narration a form of imitation where "Homer is pre-eminent among poets, for he alone combined dramatic forms with excellence of imitation" (Aristotle 8). Henceforth Homer is more than an individual. He is seen as representative and somewhat encompassing of every great artwork of the said era. His narrative gives him a multitudinous bearing as his words are spread over a time period rather than a singular given place or identity. It might be contended that he was not one person but a body of creative people. Furthermore, just as imitation of nature occurs through literary work Aristotle says:

> …narrative in form employs…a single metre…It should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete…It will thus resemble a living organism in all its unity…[Homer] detaches a single portion, and admits as episodes many events from the general story of the war…(32-33)

Therefore readers or listeners of that era could gather the underlying rhyming cadence within the epic which makes it rhythmic and lyrical. There is a sense of being in harmony with nature as pointed out by Aristotle. Moreover, even though it is inspired by a historical event, the Trojan War, the aim of the narrative is to stay in unity. Thus the storyline never digresses from Ulysses trying to reach home after the end of the war and his son searching for him. It only allows glimpses of what occurred immediately after the war through Ulysses and his recollections in Phaeaecia. While the goal of the oral

narrative remains unilinear it might break into sub-plots that give flashbacks and reasons for why something is happening in the present to make it clearer for the audience.

Therefore the oral tradition based itself on an understanding of the nature of its immediate audience in order to make the work popular, reflecting their reality and beliefs. Aristotle terms this as instincts, when he says: "Imitation, then, is one instinct of our nature. Next, there is the instinct of 'harmony' and rhythm" (7). *The Odyssey* is exemplary of natural imitation and rhythm. It is a reflection on the adventures and life of Ulysses, a historical/fictional character, on his journey back home from the Trojan wars. The epic also displays an adherence to the principle of unity of plot as Aristotle says:

> …the proper magnitude is comprised within such limits, that the sequence of events, according to the law of probability or necessity, will admit of a change from bad fortune to good, or from good fortune to bad. (13)

Moreover, Homer makes the narration revolve around single event in Ulysses' life; his return to Ithaca and the escapades in this journey. It plays within a duality of unity of plot with the multiplicity of different events encountered by the hero. Its immense length symbolizes, as Aristotle has mentioned, the magnitude of the content as well as the basis for believing that Homer might have been a gathering of a multiple artistic minds.

Some of the basic rules that characterize an epic are, firstly, the superhuman hero who is partly divine or has gods patronizing him. Thus in the epic, readers see how "The other gods in heav'n's supremest met…inducing matter that inclined/ To wise Ulysses" (bk. 1 ll. 42-46). His godliness is described in his propensity to fight natural elements as is seen in Book 5: "…he that fights with heav'n, or with the sea,/ To indiscretion adds impiety" (ll. 642-643). Also Ulysses's quests are spread over a vast expanse in settings

ranging from unknown and exotic lands to the underworld where his comrades from the Trojan War reside. He departs from Calypso to the Phaeacian city where he gives proof of his strength and intelligence and is described as god-like by the king. It is in Phaeacia too that he retells his many exploits while returning home from Troy. His wit and cunning are displayed when he says to the Cyclops: "My name is No-Man" (bk.9 l. 502) and fools them thereby escaping from their clutches.

Another feature of epic is that of the omniscient narrator who interjects throughout the epic as the voice of the writer/s, with knowledge of everything that is present and is to come. The arguments given at the beginning of each book foregrounds forthcoming events. As the voice of the narrator, they are both transitions in phases of the narrative as well as giving a definite direction to the progress of the narrative. The lines preceding Book twelve signal to this: "He shows from Hell his safe retreat/ To the isle Aeaea Circe's seat". In correlation to this is the invocation to the muses at the beginning of all epics. This creates an auspicious ambience or gives the oral narrator a status of profound and nearly divine artistic transcendence. *The Odyssey* starts with: "The Man, O Muse, inform, that many a way/ Wound with his wisdom to his wished stay" (bk. 1 l.1-2) and ends with a third person narrator expressing the conflicts in Ithaca. This validates the presence of the oral narrator even when the narrative is confined in a written form, where the audience/readers need to be reminded of his authority over the narrative technique and style. This is the way in which the ambience of an oral tradition persists even in a written text. It is a reminder of how epics are transformed in numerous mythical retellings, again pointing towards a multiplicity of voices as carriers of the epic. Emphasis is put on the reiteration of an oral narration. In the epic *The Odyssey,* readers,

like the audience, are compelled to read it as one adaptation of an ongoing narrative that embodies their reality, beliefs and to use the Aristotelian word, 'instincts'.

This reiteration, then, shows how an abstract idea is given concrete form under the name of an individual artist, whose expressions then become a part of the daily beliefs and norms of a people. Moreover the tenacity of this original re/telling is adapted to other times, places and ideals and adopted by future artists and readers. Ulysses is just such a figure. As Stanford says:

> In the medieval tradition Gower had conceived him as a clerk addicted to sorcery…Benoit and Lyndgate…in knightly armor; Shakespeare…as a suave Elizabethan negotiator…Stoics as Stoic…Christians as Christian (126).

The statement clearly hints at the profound effect of Ulysses to Post-Homeric generations. To all ages and ways of thinking – be it the euro-centric, the colonial or post-colonial – Ulysses has been wrought in many and heterogeneous forms and has been elevated to a cult figure by those who seek liberty of imagination and long for adventure.

Homer has given form to a legendary figure, the lineaments of whose character are redrawn in every age. Ulysses represents to writers of all epochs the immortal human spirit. A semiotic study can show how this figure encapsulates a body of meanings that reflects the understanding of its readers, as it can somehow be incorporated into the realities of different ages to project their surroundings changing actions and beliefs. Ulysses as a myth functions through these incorporations and reiterations where "[s]peech of this kind is a message" (Barthes 110). Thus the text provided by Homer has been translated and transformed for readers to give meaning to their lives.

As such, *The Odyssey* has been rewritten and in later literary, cultural and social traditions. It has, as Barthes says, "define[d] and explore[d] [values] as tokens of something else" (111). The Homeric Ulysses has initiated a value system with multi-layered innuendos that could be moulded to appeal to later generations of readers. This echoes in Nietzsche's statement about the fallacy of facts as variant interpretations. *The Odyssey*, as such, is almost a literary religion that has stood as a muse for many artistic minds. It is an open-ended mythology that is "a part both of semiology inasmuch as it is a formal science, and of ideology inasmuch as it is an historical science: it studies ideas-in-form" (Barthes 112). Thus as a sign, it is a sentient object that proliferates meaning and as an ideology it gives readers a sense of an idyllic era that can overcome any problems. While its signifier is Ulysses, it has signified features like chivalry, male and female values, duty to state, conformity to parentage and tradition and many more. Moreover, "…there are between the signifier, the signified and the sign, functional implications" (Barthes 113). The aim of the consequent paragraphs will be to decipher nuances found in the text that were later incorporated in the Eurocentric psyche and spread as a consequence of colonization.

The foremost of these values is that of the family as the basic social and psychic unit. In the absence of its patriarchal head who is the source of all authority, the royal family of Ithaca is seen to be falling apart. Telemachus longs for his father and Penelope is made to put up a front for the wooers who want to usurp and ruin the throne of Ithaca. The epic starts with a congress among gods, as though divinity is concerned with this mortal predicament. There is an intermingling of the profane with profundity; later to be used by Joyce as a complete trivialization of human affairs. Moreover, the need for

legality is also a facet passed onto later thinkers. Telemachus needs to prove "questionless [that he is] a right-born son" and Ulysses is supposedly a proud father because he has "Complete himself that hath a son entire" (bk. 1 Homer ll. 276 & 279). The father to son validation shows that social power and patriarchy is asserted as the strongest edifice of society. In this formulation, the woman occupies a peripheral position, and is supposed to be meek and mild and provide the space, psychoanalytically, of transference and, ideologically, of transcendence. Her weakness makes her the reason for everything that is amiss or wrong. Thus Telemachus says: "…my mother and this house/ At all parts make defamed and ruinous" (bk. 1 l. 86). The simultaneous positing of a woman and a house emphasizes both as possessions of men. Even if it is simply uttered to serve artistic purposes its plane of suggestiveness remains immense.

These preoccupations of the text with lineage, divine affiliation with a certain lineage and legality can be merged to project the system of monarchy through divine right. Although the story of Ulysses is pantheistic and believes in polytheism, the doctrine of Christianity seems to have revived parts of it to serve its purposes in a monarchical system. The question is, as was in the introduction, is there really any timeframe for exploitation and manipulation of text; moreover is there really any transition or period that changes human understanding of life. The text also points out the cost of power as fear where the lost Telemachus proclaims the aftermath of being deprived of a patriarchal authority, as the father has to wage wars to ensure the welfare of the state: "My house is sack'd, my fat works of the field/ Are all destroyed; my house doth nothing yield" (bk. 4 ll. 426-427). Relentless wars are waged, as they are done to this day, in the name of freedom.

The Odyssey subtly lays the foundation for patriarchal domination. From the hero whose validation is achieved through the impeccably faithful wife who feels daunted among the suitors to the son who is lost without his father, the epic centres around the alpha male figure. Patriarchy is enhanced through chivalrous attitude towards women, which is later echoed in the Victorians age. Thus Ulysses spends a night with Calypso to please her and to thank her for being willing to grant him freedom. To Nausicaa "…with soft words his desire their proof,/ Lest, pressing so near…might incense her maiden modesty" making politeness and graciousness a part of heroism. Finally Penelope's relentless wait is what makes Ulysses the most coveted specimen of manliness. She could have picked anyone among the suitors to bring some order back to Ithaca but she chooses to wait even when it is proven beyond doubt that he is dead.

Moreover *The Odyssey* thus can be seen as the beginning of a whole series of sign production. It is moulded, adapted and incorporated to serve many artistic and psychic needs. The many interpretations and incorporations in later narratives make *The Odyssey* a full sign and a worthy 'myth' in Roland Barthes' sense of the term. The next section is going to look at the modernist adaptation and the upending of the Ulyssean utopia of heroism and morality in a war-ridden world devoid of meaning.

The metalingual plane: Joycean Ulysses

The need to establish an arbitrary wholeness in the life of the confused modern man is one of the central attempts made by James Joyce in his *Ulysses.* Art becomes a means to construe identity in a dysfunctional society as represented by Dublin in the novel. Thus "nothing in *Ulysses* is extraneous or irrelevant-or everything is" (178, Beebe, "Ulysses and the Age of Modernism"). The identity formation is marked by hints

of nationalism, observation of the outward in internalization and the relation of the central with peripheral issues. Therefore the core characters, Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus and Molly Bloom project voyeuristic depictions of the psyche. Unlike previous portrayals of Ulysses in Homeric and Victorian times, the characters do not look outwards for inspiration; rather they are caught in inward cogitations. There is no adventure to be sought but the adventure provided by the imagination. This is where art is projected in its purest form, solely dependent on stylistic aspects regardless of the audience and concentrated on the skills and notions of the artist, creator or writer. Thus the entire construct of myth as a symbolic belief system through correlation among parts is broken down to art as complete signification as suggested by Roland Barthes in "Myth Today". The signifier, as the characters, or the signified, as the concepts associated with them, loses coherence without the form of the narrative. This section of the chapter will thus look at how the characters and their interrelations are made to depend upon the varied styles used in *Ulysses* by James Joyce. It will also observe how individual identity oscillates between the question of origin and posterity, or past and future, situated in a modern nationalistic setup which has been suppressed through colonial invasions.

Modernist novels are introverted depictions; novels that look inward rather than at the outside. The audience or readership of such writing had shrunk, especially due to the fragmentation of audience/readership and artistic creation between the two world wars. Large-scale destruction had called for a re-evaluation of meaning and a structural modulation that was to be solely dependent on the understanding of the artist. Artistic creativity was perceived as a process through which some form of wholeness could be achieved despite the over-all breakdown of values and social cohesion. Moreover at the

start of the modernist breakthrough lies the abhorred "accumulation of the Anno Domini" (*Ulysses* Joyce 124). It is the age that fosters the essay by T.S Eliot called "Tradition and the Individual Talent", where the reiteration of a sense of the past becomes necessary.

Thus, unlike the oral tradition, the modern artist finds himself in a "problem both artistic and historical, where even though the past cannot be glorified, neither can it be denied (Bradbury 394). Forms and structures are seen to hold individual or unique artistic value, but they also depict a relation to tradition. In this scenario, the novel "as a sophisticated medium had no more territory left to develop, for it turned upon itself" (Bradbury 394). This introverted feature arose because the narration of incidents and events were no longer sufficient to denote the glorification of human existence. Reprieve from a chaotic exterior is poignantly sought in a quiet interior. The modernist approach "has made the novel…an art of figures rather than and an art of adventures- an art that does not *report* the world, but *creates* it" (396). In Joyce's *Ulysses,* therefore, readers find a new sort of world, where both the language of narration and the narrative events are rendered absurd and unreal. It relies more on the minds of the character than their actions. Unlike the Aristotlean argument, the modern novel is "less [of a] world being imitated than…a process" taking place (397). Concentration of words, multiplicity of styles and psychical expressions challenge the reader's capacity of interpretation, teasing their intelligence.

The characters are totally aware of and immersed in their surroundings. They almost seem to "have read the novel in which they exist" (Bradbury 397). The central characters, especially Stephen with his artistic disposition, show "both a sense of joy in the elegance of a fiction and a sense of crisis about the relation between a novel and

God's fiction, the real universe" (Bradbury 395). To create something is to become God, as such the artist Stephen finds himself thinking: "It was very big to think about everything and everywhere. Only God could do that" (*A Portrait* Joyce 15). Contrarily the process of creating also mesmerizes him as it gives substantiality to the nothingness he associates with his existence and creation: "Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped…" (15). It is as though the process of narrative formation acts as a continuation of the artist's existence. For the artist, the placement and arrangement of words is the escape from reality as well as reality itself.

To understand this process better, let us turn to Barthes when he talks about "an abnormal regression from meaning to form" (Barthes 117). Easily perceptible techniques are followed throughout the story. These range from a collage of Dublin in the chapter entitled "Aeolus", to a multiplicity of perspectives in the "Wandering Rocks", marking and reflecting a development of English writing styles including middle English expressions to journals symbolizing development of writing as a parallel to the development of the human embryo in nine stages, monologues and catechisms. All of these finally culminate in the formless internal monologue of Molly Bloom in the last chapter, "Penelope". The narrative and stylistic heterogeneity that is accumulated and dumped into this vast expanse of chaos and non-conformity upturns Barthes' notion of regression. The progress is from a complexity of forms to establishing meaning. Reflective of the search of both Bloom and Stephen for meaning in their life, it also construes the search of the artist for truth in his life.

Furthermore this representment of a potpourri of styles from dialogues, plain prose, short accounts, journals, stream of consciousness or complete abandonment of

punctuation vouchsafes a reiteration of meaning, resulting in the formation of myth in daily life. Also, the modern psyche is reflected in all its ambiguities through the proliferation of writing styles. Hence the modern writer, here Joyce, finds himself in a quandary even while finding a voice that is unique. For the writer, the writing becomes central and the reading audience is left guessing and scrambling for meaning.Writing, hitherto simply as a reflection of reality, seems to have lost its salience where interpretation becomes more important than a perusal of the text. It is as if the time of the novel, where Europe is enmeshed in internal chaos and on the brink of another World War is aptly depicted in the quagmire the writer finds himself in as he struggles to find a narrative voice and style. On a more individual level, it is also a veneration of the challenge Joyce takes up in "finding order and logic and structure where few had hitherto seen anything but chaos, enormity and all-inclusiveness" (91, Benstock, "*Ulysses* without Dublin"). The tumult that the writer resides in is expressed in the lines: "That is his tragedy. He can never be a poet. The joy of creation" (*Ulysses* Joyce 235*).* The word of the individual becomes important, even in its illegibility; it serves a purpose for the interlocutor. The microcosm that he creates thus may or may not be related to the whole.

This need of the writer to be a separate entity is reminiscent of Ireland and its need to have a unique national identity. In the opening chapter, the country is represented by the milkmaid who resembles "A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror…" (*Ulysses* Joyce 17*).* Thus while the milkmaid embodies Ireland, Haines the one who she serves encapsulates an overbearing and imperial "tall figure" (*Ulysses* Joyce 15*).* The presence of the English usurper is symbolically felt in this depiction. The integrity of Irish identity is shown to be unstable with "the cracked looking glass of a

servant being the symbol of Irish art" (Joyce 20*)* where a direct reflection of the current circumstances could not express the view of the writer so immersed in colonial fragmentations. There has to be something which could uphold the entirety of Ireland as other than "a servant of two masters…an English and an Italian" even as "a horrible example of free thought" (*Ulysses* Joyce 25-26*).*

Stephen Dedalus remains an extension of the writer where the constant requirement to establish Shakespeare as Hamlet can be retraced to Joyce as Dedalus. The search for parentage can be linked to the search for a sense of the past that has been eradicated in the psyche of the colonized individual. This is required in order to construe a collective similitude among the colonized. Otherwise, everything will remain in a chaos in a nation which is defined by Leopold Bloom as "the same people living in the same place…Or also living in different places" (*Ulysses* Joyce 313*).* Therefore characters in *Ulysses* embody the dislocated colonized mindset, whose rebelliousness does not have a well-defined aim. Similarly Stephen Dedalus's cogitations about formulating a culture do not necessarily look to the past. For him, the past is murky being distorted by colonization. Thus he proposes, "a hold to the now, the here, through which all future plunges to the past" (*Ulysses* Joyce 176*).* This view, as is seen throughout the novel, is dismissed as an anomaly. Furthermore the invocation of the clearly forgotten past only enhances the superficiality of venerating a Celtic origin that cannot be traced. Thus while the writer believes in formulating a new identity, he does not support finding the identity as a truce with traditions that cannot be a part of reality anymore. This looks like a reaction to an imperial agenda. Liberation is to be found in the new reiteration of the language of domination, rather than a complete disregard of it.

As such, art finds full meaning in the narrative trajectory traced by the individual artist, even if it fails to connect with the audience. The novel seems to be wavering among many forms displaying the skills of the writer, who is nonetheless unable to deliver a cathartic moment for even the most attentive reader. This inability to draw the reader along with the narrative makes us wonder about the reason for writing in this manner. An answer can be found in Morton P. Levitt's essay "A Hero for Our Time: Leopold Bloom and the Myth of *Ulysses*", where he says: "the novel was valuable precisely because it was soulless, because its disjunction of characters, incidents and form reflected perfectly the anarchy of its times" (132). The crucial word here is anarchy or a breaking away from order and established norms. Joyce upends narrative norms to highlight writing forms which become the main device to bring to life his characters. Nevertheless, he aims at authenticity, which he does by describing what he considers the normal and natural, and what is considered as 'vulgar' in literary expression.

Thus the quest of two of the central characters in *Ulysses* is almost a religious one. The quest of "The Father and the Son" records not merely a search but a discovery (*Ulysses* Joyce 22*)*. Each atones for the other, completes the journey and sets the course for the future. In this way they can also be seen as a reflection of each other where the past, present and future coalesce. This is aptly shown in the line: "We walk through ourselves, meeting robbers, ghosts…old men, young men…but always meeting ourselves" (Joyce 201). Thus it is not only a way to find origin and posterity but also an attempt to find the self hidden among others. While both travel in search of a worthy son and father both find that "having itself traversed in reality itself becomes that self" (Joyce 444*)*. On the other hand, for Stephen a "small act, trivial in itself…determined the whole

aftercourse of both (the) lives" (Joyce 133*)* where their sojourn ended in a fairytale-like manner with "the sound of the peal of the hour of the night" (Joyce 585*).* Thus Stephen carries a "sense of impending destiny" throughout the narrative (Kain 153). This destiny is achieved through the "Substituting of Stephen for Bloom Stoom…Bloom for Stephen Blephen" where the Father and the Son dichotomy end to make way for a unification through transference (Joyce 567).

The aforementioned analysis is suggestive of the inward-looking modern mind which seeks to achieve individualistically and pragmatically an identity of its own which can aptly capture a unique selfhood. It is somehow meant to appease an understanding of the ambivalent state of a modern and chained existence which can reason but cannot liberate itself. It is a quest to re-assert functionality and structure in a society steeped in a chaotic stupor. Thus it also seeks to formulate a myth which is not merely isolated on the linguistic plane but has cultural meanings that have been distorted in the colonial setting. As Scholes says: "For Stephen 'is' Joyce in a different way from the way Bloom is. Stephen is Joyce in his skin…But Bloom contains large elements of Joyce's neural circuitry" (Scholes 165). All these factors culminate to create a frail male figure who can now be considered as parallel rather than superior to the female figure. However patriarchal vestiges make it difficult to encapsulate the female figure into any of the many structures that are vying for domination. The male figure remains as an unsure citizen unable to question or understand the reasons of the nation moving in different directions set by its historicity and the burden of the many conquerors that have dominated the nation, but never breached its intrinsic barriers.

Women are made to represent this pristine national space, and this is what makes her position impeachable, as she is impervious to colonizing forces. This is now embodied in Molly Bloom who is [in]famous as being talented and scandalous. Elusive, she is not apologetic for her conduct and her free-flowing mental meanderings project the independence of Ireland and its national psyche. Her romantic interludes are always interposed by thoughts of her husband Leopold Bloom. That Bloom has completed a cycle in assuring the worth of his existence through a vicarious journey with Stephen, is now paired with the transitional mood Molly is in. There are constant hints that somehow both are related and the success of one might result in the reconciliation with the other. National conquest and defeat are related to Molly Bloom and her affairs. These problematize the process of identification with the husband in the individual narrative or with the native in the national one. The fact that: "they always want to see a stain on the bed" refers to the crucial moment in which the colonized is unable to tolerate exploitation any longer, wants full national independence and no more bloodshed (Joyce 641*)*; but the nation is shown to be "waiting always waiting" (Joyce 630*).* As a depiction of a female character, Molly and her lack of morality [and punctuation] might mean that she finds bliss in ignorance as she lies trapped within the four-poster of her bed. She might also embody an open field subject to any and many interpretations. As Barthes contends Molly represents the absurd form where "what the form can always give one to read is disorder itself: it can give a signification to the absurd, make the absurd itself a myth" (126). In other words, it is a warning to people who look for or read structures too closely. Molly represents freedom from tradition and societal constraints and structures; she represents the space of artistic liberation. The Molly figure can be extended to

become a signification that denotes the liberation of the modern mind from the authoritative patriarchal figure of Ulysses; a muse or a space of inspiration that needs to be resurrected for modern times. The formlessness of her soliloquy stands in for an absurdity from where new myths might emerge, as suggested by Barthes.

Literary form becomes "a rupture and a redoubling" (Derrida 89). As the novel ends with Molly's soliloquy, the reader is left with the image of a breakdown of form in a narrative which had concentrated on narrative and literary forms, as represented in the complete seamlessness with which Molly's thoughts/cogitations/psyche are depicted. The modern novel is more concerned with the process of creation rather than the events that appear as peripheral and only to fill in the progress of the narrative. As Jacques Derrida (from Lodge and Wood) says:

> …classical thought…could say that the center is…*within* the structure and *outside* it. The center is the center of the totality, and yet…does not belong to the totality…a play constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which itself is beyond the reach of the play. (90)

Therefore Molly's passivity and constriction within the four-poster bed and the mental freedom that allows her to wander far beyond the boundaries represented by the bed, show how difficult it is to centre her position as within or outside the narrative frame. The final chapter thus signifies the deconstruction of the centered structure, placing her both within and beyond the coherence that narrative structure seeks to establish.

Therefore, narrative becomes the signification for a new myth or sign-system. It does this by oscillating between literary forms and styles, giving the text its own

subjectivity, where the story becomes a world in itself. The signification is not under any sort of pressure from prior examples; it forges a new path, and is not merely a reiteration. It transcends the lingual plane in which it is set. What is reiteration of a sign from a lingual plane? The objective of the next section is to find its traces in the Victorian era as expressed through Tennyson's poem "Ulysses". It is the emphatic interim, the verge after which Modernism wishes to emancipate itself from any previous notions.

The Artificial Reiteration: Tennyson's "Ulysses"

If the Ulysseses construed by Homer and Joyce lie on opposite ends of myth formation and embody construction and deconstruction at opposing ends, the Victorian Ulysses acts as an in-between reiteration. This is a repetition of the old myth placed within new ideals. The Victorian era symbolizes the veneration of an individual self, leaving no space for the other where the individual/self dichotomy finds expression. A sense of propriety is also a key feature of this era, which bespeaks a sense of superiority socially and racially. The sense of individuality is accompanied by a sense of superiority, which can also be seen as parallel to the sense of national or racial superiority which is part of the colonial enterprise in which Victorian England is so strongly immersed. It is also an age of suppression where the social codes and strict rules and discipline govern human lives. Art and literary work in such an epoch would also undergo regimentation. However with its belief in individual freedom, there is in the Victorian novel a clash between the individual human subject and social values and expectations. Thus the Victorian Ulysses, while rooted in the Homeric mythology, works as an expression "not [one] of equality but [one] of equivalence" (Barthes 112). This is doubly true as many critics have also contended that Tennyson's "Ulysses" is also inspired by the character of

Ulysses as depicted in Dante's *Inferno* which is again a reiteration of the Homeric mythology. Here, though, he is thrust into the fires of Hell and recognized not for his valour but for his cunning. This shows how Ulysses in medieval times imbibed the spirit of strict religious morals where heroism is second-class. Therefore, heroism is made more viable by bringing it down to the individual plane thus propagating and reiterating the values prevalent among readers of in the Victorian era. In other words Tennyson refurbishes the epic as a dramatic monologue, concentrating on the expression of an individual psyche, as it seeks glory in a constrictive society.

A brief examination of the elements of the dramatic monologue is necessary in order to see the contribution it makes to the sign of Ulysses, while it acts as the reflection of the values of a particular era. First the poem starts in a dramatic manner, and its tone is nearly abrupt while addressing an imagined and silent audience. There is a drawing in of the external, and a seeking of approval from readers/audience, even though the speech is focused on the speaker's psyche and mindset. Its language is casual and invites the audience to interpret at leisure. There is an unswaying surety of a known audience; something that we saw is completely missing in modern times. This is somewhat closer to the Homeric and its relationship to its audience although in written format; it completes the cycle of reiteration as well as conforms to the values of the 'literate' society of the times. These forms are more inviting to the readers, drawing them directly into the narrative. The dramatization, therefore, symbolizes the suppression that has to be thwarted and the monologue is a representation of an individual quest.

In Tennyson's poetry, Langbaum notices "a certain life-weariness, a longing for rest through oblivion" (89). This is quite contrary to the line that is most quoted from

Tennyson's *Ulysses* which motivates everyone "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" (l. 70). The reference to weariness comes from the fact that unlike the original Ulysses who despite his age had retained a vigour that surpasses that of any youth, the Tennysonian Ulysses is "Match'd with an aged wife…" and is inflicted with a slow withering away of his powers (l. 2). Also the Homeric Ulysses is proud of Ithaca and considers his adventures in distant lands and exotic people an honour, Tennyson's Ulysses places other peoples under the large banner of "…a savage race" (l.4). This is part of the discourse of colonialism, where European man justifies the oppression of other races based on a sense of superiority that dismisses other races as savages. By extension, this world-weariness can also be seen as foreshadowing the psyche of the fallen modern man where like Stephen he is "part of all that he has met" (l. 18). However, he equates himself with the mythical heroes of the past, and being all powerful, he cannot move beyond the central zone of power thereby immobilized by his own power. There is a running dichotomy throughout the poem that makes it almost cross timelines.

Thus "Tennyson's character is as many-sided as Homer's 'man of many turns'" (Pettigrew 31). There is a multiplicity which will be further aggravated in the modern Ulysses and which has been seen in the Homeric Ulysses of many escapades. The end of the poem, however, seems to mark an end, lacking the continuity that can be observed in Joycean characterization. Instead there is a stasis where "oblivion is not a first step…toward a transformed being but an end in itself" which will later be enacted by Joyce as continuity in the process of creation as the subject or content of the narrative; something that might immortalize the work rather than end it (Langbaum 89).

Barthes analysis of myths is perhaps the most useful for our understanding. As he writes, "…myth prefers…incomplete images…relieved of its fat, ready for a signification" (127). What the Victorian Ulysses is abandoning is the excessive heroic stature of the Homeric mythical figure. In other words, it is getting ready for a new signification in the Joycean representation. "Myth can develop its second-order schema…from the very lack of meaning" where the modern Ulysses, Mr. Bloom, can embody a mundane and weak persona in search for meaning and stability acting almost like a floating signifier (Barthes 131). Thus unlike in any other period Bloom becomes a myth in the Barthean sense of the term, as in its own realm through multiple interpretations it formulates a language which "does not want to die: it wrests from its meanings which give it its sustenance" (133)[5]. It might be that something might come forth out of the prolific body of interpretations lent to the body of Joycean *Ulyssses.*

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Tennyson's "Ulysses" leads to this conclusion. This is because its formation sets basis for a psychological interpretation. Its link to the past also gives the idea of profundity and timelessness in writing. All of these do result in the modernist outlook although it remains rebellious to the end. Only in Tennyson's depiction is there a sense of ease in utterance and new formulation. It does imbibe from prior Homeric ideas but presents it in a Victorian, individualistic and psychological manner. Its traditionalism lies in its adherence to please the audience and enthrall them. The poem is not about the writer's search for truth, when read it might give an insight to the mind of the narrator and illumine the mind of the reader thereby. In some ways it keeps the Barthean myth alive in this way but it also incorporates its own essence

[5] Insistence on words such as 'metempsychosis', 'somnabulism' and 'inelauctable' all show a concentration of meaning among the words and within the myriad of structures explored though the narrative.

of subjectivity. It is a two-way narrative, as such, which gives meaning and takes atention from the readers. While the Homeric Ulysses is shown to provide meaning for its audience and readers with almost a negation of the narrator himself as perceived in the elusive identity of Homer, the modern Ulysses shuts himself in his own story which is incoherent to any other beside him. Only Tennyson's "Ulysses" has a concrete and confident identity and seems to know what his present and past is about and how he wants to visualize his future encompassing surer times.

Conclusion

There is a sense of kinship that extends over time among artists. It resembles an evolutionary growth in narrative, thoughts and imagination. The recurrence of Ulysses shows this bond. A narrative, though patented, will always remain a communal statement. It is from and about the people who read and appreciate such demonstrations of artistic virtue. From oral tradition, the form has changed to precise poems like the dramatic monologue and finally the modern introverted novels where the subject remains the same. A piece of work, therefore, represents the window to human thought where there is a linearity of progressive growth in narrative complexity. Even Barthes concept of myth formation shows this invincibility of ideas once it has been introduced to the human thoughts in relation to meanings. One thought will always lead to another and open up more spaces for further application in reality. Even when there is no centrality, ideas have proliferated as can be seen in Joyce's persistence with form and formlessness where symbolic representation becomes much more pregnant than the impact of forthright words. In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that timeframes emphasize both transition and the ties among ages. Artistic renditions almost blur timelines as seen through adaptations of Ulysses.

In the Homeric epic we see the development of a bold and fearless character who is infused with legendary acumen in the Trojan War. This historic-fictional retelling makes it a matter that will remain of inspiration through all times. It does not merely idealize war through hero worship it also gives reasons for faith in human dexterity. The fact that humans can overcomes adverse situations even when gods are against them is the crucial point made by the epic. In a fantastical manner it makes people want to believe in human ability when all is lost. He even foretells of this irksome continued

existence where unlike "all the Greeks with funerals glorified…Where now [he] die[s] by no man mourn'd nor known" (bk. 5 l. 399 & 401). While he fears anonymity, he also fears the lack of an end. This continued existence is proven in later adaptations, as discussed in the thesis, how he is never completely dead when he is "Inverted quite amidst the waves" of time through Bloom (l. 404). He generates a body of never-ending meaning that hardly is ever satiated even if distorted. Thus there is continuation and the zeal to carry on through multiplicity of struggles that is inherent in the hyperbolic tale of Ulysses.

About the child named Odyssey who presents the next generation of Ulysses, it is stated that:

> …when so many men's and women's woes,
> In joint compassion met of human birth,
> Brought forth t'attend many feeding earth,
> Let Odysseus be his name, as one
> Expos'd to just constraint of all men's moan. (bk. 19 ll. 566-571)

This foreshadows the later depictions as a means to portray human suffering through art. The fact that the epic is named as a consequence to the spirit of struggle in the epitome of human glory depicts a dichotomy. Thus human life itself is not referred to in a singular manner. There is always a conflict among ideas that pervade through narrations which is incorporated by Tennysonian and, more strongly, by Joycean adaptations.

In Tennyson, there is a struggle between the individual and the society. The artist tries to set his work apart by giving it a dramatic and singular voice with a silent and presupposed audience, resulting in the creation of the dramatic monologue. He finds his

reprieve in this psychical deliberation which defines his identity. It also points out the development of individualism as an idea from the multi-faceted Homeric epic. It does not imbibe everything around Ulysses. From all-inclusiveness he shifts towards an exclusive meandering in his mind. There is also an invocation to old age and debilitation that point towards a growth of the Ulysses of vigour and strength to the Ulysses of old age and misery "always roaming with a hungry heart" (l. 12). There is always a search associated with Ulysses and a continuation. It also hints at the sense of advancement that each era projects in narration. While Homer, demonstrated it in a glorification mingled with a tragic mode, Tennyson directly addresses it as weariness within the mundane social norms and the rampant theological disparities going on in England at that time. Thus as Nietzsche says: "*reasonableness,* practical and theoretical utilitarianism…is symptomatic of a decline in strength…of physiological exhaustion" redolent of the weariness found in Tennyson when imperial conquest is at its height (8). For Greeks this is seen in the dependence on Dionysus, a dichotomy in his identity, as origin for narrative styles, as "suffering from superabundance itself" (Nietzsche 4). There is always a struggle as such in human beings.

By the beginning of the Modernist era this struggle reaches its acme and is transferred onto narratives that are fragmented and embody multiplicity in structure. The modern artist, writer or narrator sees himself as an "unscrupulous and amoral artist-god who frees himself from the dire pressure of fullness…from…the oppositions packed within him" (Nietzsche 8). It is through his or her creation that the artist transcends boundaries of time, society and physical surroundings. Joyce in his Ulysses speaks of this transcendence where he finds himself embroiled in the everything and nothing of his

creation. This general artistic disposition can be succinctly portrayed in this statement: "I would prefer that nothing were true, rather than know that *you* were right, that *your* truth turned out to be right" (Nietzsche 11). There is a sense of individuality coupled with the abandonment of tradition for a completely new narration. As has been discussed in the previous section the modern novel is introverted. It speaks to the writer while the characters speak to the novel too. The creation is signified by its process where it is a microcosm of the writer's reality which has almost no semblance to the world around. The epic's imitation of human glory is inverted in the modern avatar. It is "against the *moral* interpretation and significance of existence" (Nietzsche 8).Thus the Joycean *Ulysses* remains impervious to worldly interpretations as it has tried its best to sever all ties of regimentation to be lost in its own infinity of all-exclusive meaning. This is shown by its insistence on using many styles of narration throughout the novel which is drowned in an amorphous expanse of monologue.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be contended that though different narrations might have adopted complexities and heterogeneity, they continue to affect the human condition. The differences lay the basis for deciphering linkages. Each artist, Homer, Tennyson and Joyce represent an avant-garde move away from traditionalism in their own way. They are all conveying equal amounts of glory or admonition to society, even if presented in a satirical and subtle way. Each narration is a world in its own giving birth to meaning in the lives of the readers as a literary work is both "the resurrection and the life" of beliefs that have been lost and might be rejuvenated through a new perspective (*Ulysses* Joyce 102). Even in their utter forlornness that is what the modern works valorize. In the line quoted from Joyce's *Ulysses:* "We walk through ourselves, meeting

robbers, ghosts, giants…young men, wives…brothers-in-love, but always meeting ourselves" it shows how there is unification within the individual of the multitudinous and confusing perspectives (201). The individual artist will always survive the tumult of subjectivity and rise above it to give new but coherent meanings to the world around them from the world that is within.

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